COMPUTER ARTS

DESIGN MATTERS

ISSUE #268

JULY 2017
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THE UK

CREATIVE INSPIRATION

CHARACTER DESIGN TRENDS

Pictoplasma reveals what's hot in character illustration

CASH IN AS A
FREELANCER

HOW TO EASE YOUR MONEY WORRIES
AND FOCUS ON BEING CREATIVE

PRICING • PITCHING • PERSUADING • AND MORE!

Future

CREATE STANDOUT BRANDING
How The Clearing carves out clear,
defendable territory for its clients

DESIGN STUNNING SIGNAGE
Luke Stockdale reveals how to make
signs beautiful as well as functional

DESIGN JOBS BOARD

The best design jobs today

DJB

designjobsboard.com

Making the cover

The pitch-black wit of Bryce Bladon's feature on navigating the murky world of freelancing encouraged us to go in a playful direction for our cover and feature illustrations. We wanted an illustrator who could give us fun.

Former Italian Wired illustrator, Marco Goran Romano, has been on our list of 'want' collaborators ever since he went freelance, so we were delighted when he agreed to pitch in, knowing that as a world-renowned freelancer himself, he would have a real feeling for the subject matter. He had also previously done some beautifully colourful droids that we took a real shine to.

As this month's cover feature attests, successful freelancers need an enormous range of skills and abilities to stay ahead of the game – hence our multi-limbed freelance droid, a super efficient machine that can juggle the multitude of tasks required of him.

We love the playful hybrid of an ED-209 and Wall–E that Marco conjured up for us, and hope our freelance readers take him to their beating, metal hearts.

MARCO GORAN ROMANO

Award-winning illustrator Marco works with his business partner and wife in Italy. After establishing a formidable reputation working in-house for Italian Wired, he went freelance to deliver work for Facebook, GQ, IBM, Microsoft, The New Yorker, TIME and many more premier clients.
www.goranfactory.com
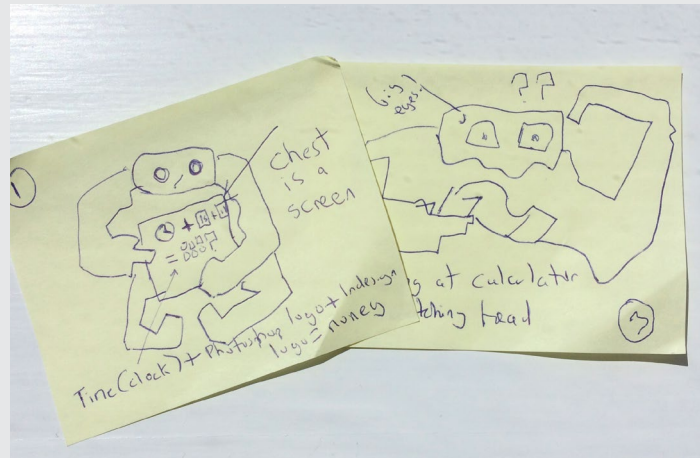
Left: Inspired (ahem) doodles brainstormed by Mark and Nick were translated into beautiful Illustrator files by Marco, bringing our (frankly mutant) droid to life within the cover feature.
Below: The cover itself was refined only slightly from the first draft; the rocket engine was deemed excessive. The original shocking orange was maintained (after a few colourway trials), accentuating the clean, bright colours of Marco's illustration.
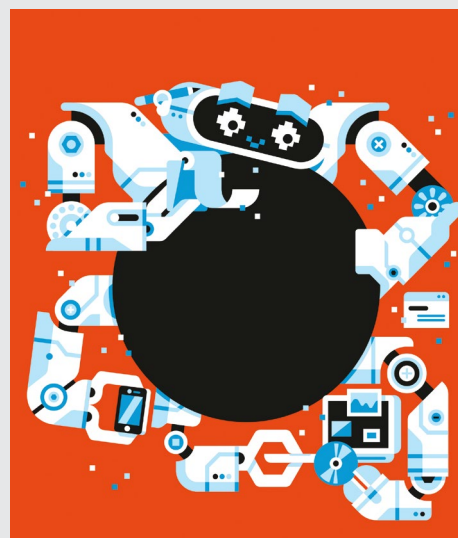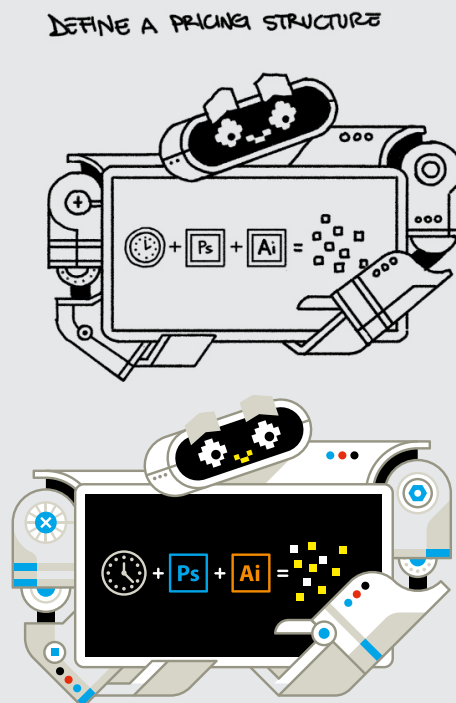
Editor's letter

Ask any freelancer what their biggest worry is, and it's likely to involve money. How do you decide what to charge for your talents when first starting out – or negotiate higher rates when you know what you're doing? Can you get enough invoices paid on time each month to cover your outgoings?

That freelance dream of being your own boss, taking on the projects you want, setting your own hours, and working in your underwear (if you so choose) may be clouded by this financial uncertainty if you don't get your affairs in order.

But fear not. Our cover feature this month is absolutely packed with great advice to help you conquer all your cash concerns as a freelancer – from selling yourself to new clients, to chasing up late-paying existing ones.

With the help of the co-founders of Pictoplasma, we're also dipping our toes into the vibrant world of character design with an inspiring journey through the four hottest trends to watch out for this year.

Elsewhere, take a trip with us to The Clearing and discover why finding 'clear, defendable territory' should be the goal of any branding project. The Brand Impact Award-winning agency sheds some light on its process, and shares some tips for how to defend that territory once you find it.

Next month, it's our annual celebration of the very best graduate talent from all across the UK – our fourth-annual New Talent special, with the winner of our D&AD New Blood cover design contest taking pride of place. If you're just about to graduate, you'll also find a useful guide to landing your first job – whatever route you choose to take. See you then!

● NICK CARSON
Editor
nick.carson@futurenet.com

KEEP IN TOUCH WITH...

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SAM BECKER
Sam is executive creative director at Brand Union. On page 20, he argues that for brands to survive in the internet age, they need to be flexible and transparent, with a compelling narrative.
www.brandunion.com

LISA HASSELL
Lisa is the director of Inkygoodness and We Are Goodness, and has seven years' experience in the creative industries. On page 24, she reveals why she's had to redefine what happiness means to her.
www.wearegoodness.com

BRYCE BLADDON
Creative communications specialist Bryce is the editor-in-chief of hilarious cult blog Clients From Hell. He shares advice for how you can cash in as a freelancer on page 42.
www.clientsfromhell.net

LARS DENICKE
Along with Peter Thaler, Lars is founder and director of Pictoplasma – an annual conference in Berlin examining contemporary character design. On page 58, he shares four key trends in this area.
academy.pictoplasma.com

CLAUDINE O'SULLIVAN
Claudine is known for her distinctive hand-drawn illustrations, and is a recent World Illustration Awards category winner. She gives her advice for using Apple Pencil and iPad Pro on page 88.
www.claudineosullivan.com

COMPUTER ARTS

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When you have finished with this magazine please recycle it.

MEET THE TEAM

NICK CARSON
EDITOR
Nick has been 'treating' the team to pictures of his new bike shed, painted with an abstract mountain pattern under his fiancée's art direction. He doesn't yet have a bike to put it in it, but is working on that.

MARK WYNNE
ART EDITOR
Mark became obsessed with monk and 'typestract' artist Dom Sylvester Houédard (see CA's Instagram account). The next step is to start dressing in black and take a vow of chastity. Er, actually...

ROSIE HILDER
OPERATIONS EDITOR
Rosie has recently taken up running, and is disappointed by the team's muted reaction to her big achievement: running non-stop for 20 minutes. She has also been making/eating lots of cake.

KEY CONTRIBUTORS

PETE GRAY
VIDEO PRODUCER
Pete had the pleasure of joining Nick on this month's visit to The Clearing, and is now off to pastures new. Although these events were totally unrelated, Pete will enjoy having new territory to defend.

DOM CARTER
STAFF WRITER, CREATIVE BLOQ
Dom went to TYPO Berlin, where he got stuck in with the festival atmosphere and attempted to sing in German. He's also been arranging a trip to the Isle of Wight, where he'll be actively avoiding the festival.

Production notes

PRINTERS
TEXT AND COVER CMYK, PLUS PANTONE 811C (INTENSE)
William Gibbons

PRINT FINISHING PARTNER:

Celloglas™

PAPER
COVER
Precision Special Gloss FSC 250gsm
P3–74: Ultra Mag Plus Gloss 90gsm
P75–98: GraphoInvent 70gsm

TYPEFACES
Trump Gothic West, Akkurat, Simplo, Kondola and Calluna

Jeremy Tankard

IS THOROUGHLY PLEASED

TO ANNOUNCE

A WONDERFULLY REFRESHED

WEBSITE

New **typography.net** New

REPLETE WITH MANY

MARVELLOUS

TYPEFACES

DON'T DELAY · VISIT TODAY

CONTENTS

CULTURE

Variations

Site Trackers:
AddThis
Adnxs
Amplitude
Doubleclick
Facebook
Fullstory
Google AdWords Conversion

No. of Data Brokers = Organism Squirms

INSIGHT

SHOWCASE

PROJECTS

SPECIAL REPORT

58 TRENDS IN CHARACTER DESIGN

The co-founders of Pictoplasma reveal the latest trends in character design, including the reimagining of faces in response to selfie culture

IN CONVERSATION WITH

50 LUKE STOCKDALE

How sign maker Luke Stockdale uses his knowledge of branding and typography to create beautiful architectural signs that aim to raise the standard of the industry

INDUSTRY ISSUES
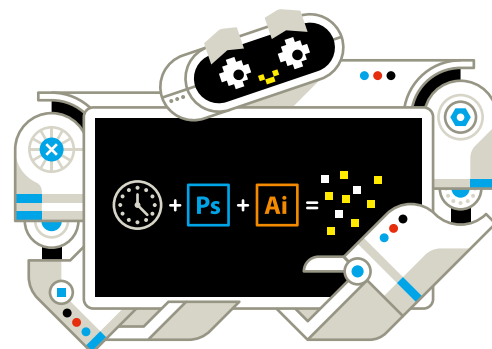
42 CASH IN AS A FREELANCER

Bryce Bladon, editor-in-chief of Clients From Hell, shares his advice for making more as a freelancer – from pricing to pitching

BACK TO BASICS

70 HOW TO IMPRESS THE JUDGES

Tom Manning reveals insider insight into the New Blood judging process

REGULARS

96 WRITING FOR THE WEB

Online writing has its own set of considerations, says Reed Words

98 DESIGN ICON

Debbie Millman recalls how her love of labels and logos began

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TRENDS

RESPONSIVE DIGITAL ENVIRONMENTS

Digital experiences are becoming more immersive as designers explore new ways to interact online

O nline culture is rooted in collaboration and crowdsourcing, and the ever-changing and ephemeral nature of digital content has shifted our technological expectations from purely visual to experiential. We now expect everything to react, respond and keep us entertained, while advances in software and design mean that the data we share online enables personalised online experiences. On the flip side, our digital consumption can make us feel powerless and overwhelmed due to the seemingly unlimited possibilities that are available. There is an opportunity for designers and brands to help consumers manage their digital lives and explore the unlimited potential of human collaboration and creativity, without getting lost in meaningless internet browsing that diminishes our attention span, focus and creative power.

With Watermelon Sugar (pictured), London-based visual artist Pamm Hong investigated online behaviours through a digital platform that visualises users' browsing history as an abstract creature. She invites people to reflect on how to adopt more responsible and thoughtful digital consumption, and look at how to access a variety of opinions and ideas rather than limiting themselves to a social-media 'bubble'.

Similarly, The Beautiful Meme and Bong created an interactive game for the V&A's Collecting Europe festival where participants were able to express their points of view about boundaries and identity – which were then represented by a digital avatars. The resulting unique icon joined other participants' avatars on-screen to form a global, constantly evolving collective shape. This playful way of inviting people to participate in a public dialogue about the future of nations and politics via an interactive game enhances the positive role that technology plays as a facilitator of constructive dialogue, social cohesion, and awareness of the complexities of our era.

TopoTopo, by Hush, uses open-source data to enable users to create their own personalised topography-based puzzles. Combining various contemporary disruptive design technologies, from generative design to open-source and 3D printing, Hush is responding to consumer demand for responsive online experiences. When a specific geographical location is entered into the TopoTopo interface, an algorithm generates an accurate digital model of that locale. The user can then alter certain variables to warp the shape, before ordering a 3D-printed version.

Online environments and interfaces are becoming ever more responsive, thanks to advances in digital technology. We're experiencing a shift away from passive interaction to personalised engagement, responding to consumer desire for more immersive online experiences. These engage users in collective dialogues and offer rewards in return for data, while providing a visual portrait of the user's digital movements. ▶
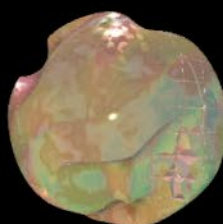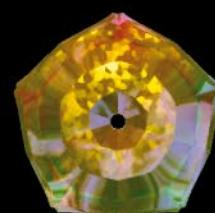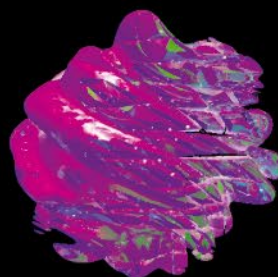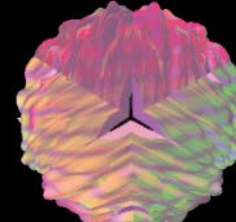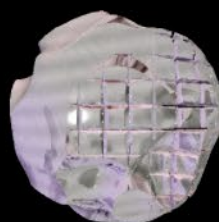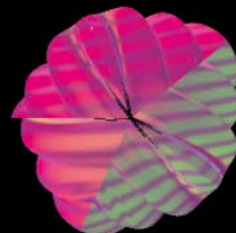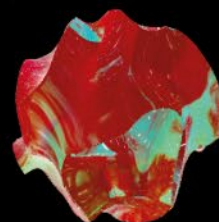
COLLECTING EUROPE BY
THE BEAUTIFUL MEME & BONG
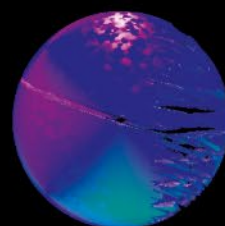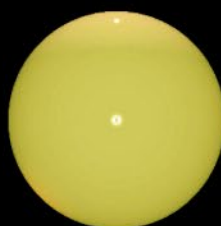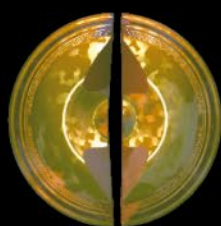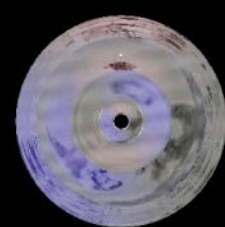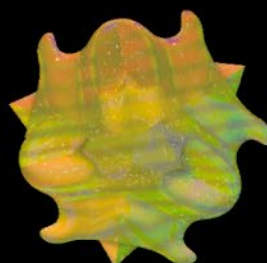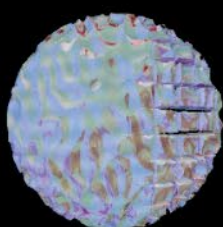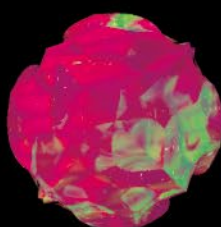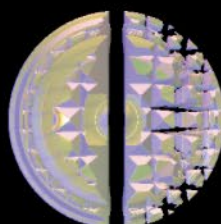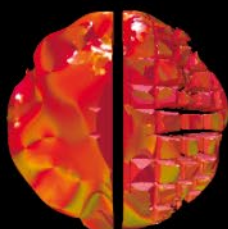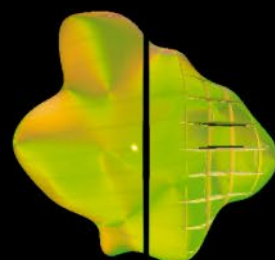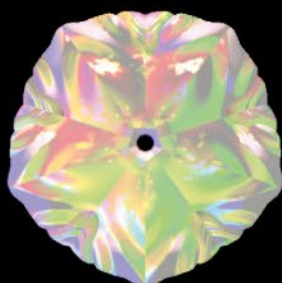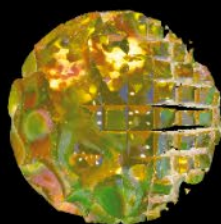
Cardrona Valley

White Mountains

TOPOTOPO
BY HUSH

Variations

No. of Data Brokers = Organism Squirms

Site Trackers:
AddThis
Adnxs
Amplitude
Doubleclick
Facebook
Puffstory
Google AdWords Conversion
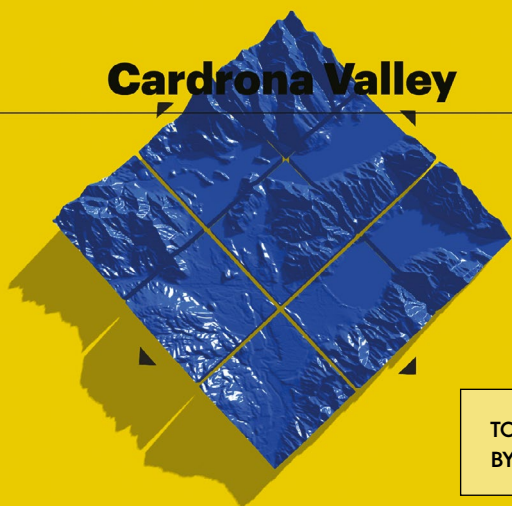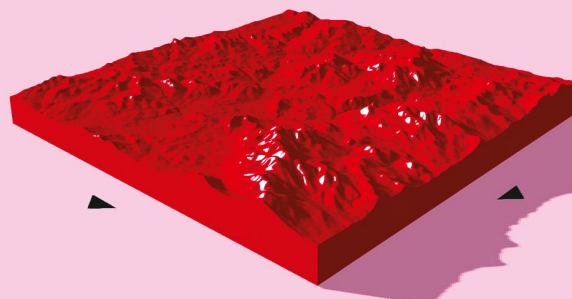
WATERMELON SUGAR
BY PAAM HONG
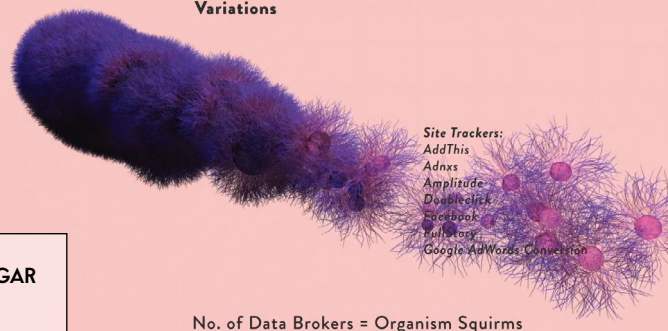
FRANKLINTILL STUDIO

Design Futures / Material Futures / Colour Futures

FranklinTill Studio is a forecasting agency and creative consultancy that
works with lifestyle brands across the disciplinary spectrum to provide
research-based insights that drive creative innovations in materials,
colour and design. It creates reports, publications, exhibitions and events
with the aim of making its research both accessible and inspiring. It also
edits and produces two magazines, published by View Publications,
which you can buy from www.viewpoint-magazine.com.

VIEWPOINT DESIGN
Viewpoint delivers visual, editorial and statistical information to brands,
designers, agencies and consumer insight teams determined to create
lifestyle products, campaigns and environments that anticipate consumer
demand. Written by professionals in the branding and design business,
each issue explores how a significant trend will impact consumer
behaviour and the global design landscape.

VIEWPOINT COLOUR
Launched December 2016, Viewpoint Colour offers visual inspiration,
design direction and a global perspective on colour. The inaugural
issue provides an in-depth analysis of the personality traits of emerging
colour stories, explaining why they are relevant now and how they
are currently being applied.

Call for Entries:
Show Your True Self with a Character Selfie!

Face-Off

Character Selfie by Guillaume Kashima

Pictoplasma challenges young, emerging artists ages 18–24 to express their personality with a self-portrait that lets their true character shine. Win a full-on Character Design Fellowship, including participation in the Pictoplasma Academy Mexico City and the 2018 Berlin Conference.

PICTOPLASMA.COM/FACE-OFF

PICTOPLASMA | **PROJECT 1324**

Founded by British designer, Paul Hutchison, Hype Type is a design and creative studio in LA that specialises in brand identity, art direction and typography. www.hypetypestudio.com

MY DESIGN SPACE IS...

FLOODED IN LIGHT

Hype Type founder, Paul Hutchison, explains how he has embraced the LA lifestyle

Located in a former architect's office, LA-based design firm Hype Type's studio benefits from high ceilings and incredible natural light. The best part? The detached studio sits in the grounds of the house that British-born Paul Hutchison shares with his wife, a fashion stylist. With no commute, Hutchison spends the "hour or more" he's saved surfing or cycling before the day starts. "There's a lot of freedom," he says.

The studio is filled with art and prints from friends and other designers. "This California skateboard print (**1**) was designed by our good friend and super-talented designer Michael Leon. It's one of our most prized possessions," says Hutchison.

There are also many typographic prints, including a few type systems by design studio MuirMcNeil, and a striking Haçienda print by Mark Farrow. "This print takes me back to

some great times in the club and Manchester during the '90s," he says. "Another special print is the British Bird Chart, designed by our friends at Build. My dad taught me how to identify birds in the garden when I was growing up. This print reminds me of home," he explains.

There are always skateboards (**2**) around the studio: some they have designed, others they use and some they love as art. Music plays an important part in studio life too. "We're lucky to have one

of our clients, Sonos (**3**), provide the sound," says Hutchison.

"We custom designed our outdoor studio space (**4**) with help from another of our clients, Mark Tessier Landscape Architects. We use the patio and garden area when on the phone, eating lunch or to do a spot of gardening as a distraction from work."

There's variation indoors too. "I alternate between sitting and standing. My back thanks me for the Sit/Stand Desks (**5**)," he says. ◻
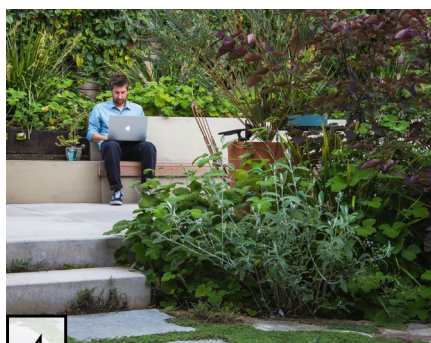
A former executive creative director at Purpose, Stuart Youngs is now collaborating with two partners on his new project, Texture.

NEW VENTURES

MACHINE LEARNING

After 10 years at Purpose, Stuart Youngs has set up **Texture**
to explore new modes of communication via innovative products

After 10 years as a partner at Purpose, Stuart Youngs has set up his own company, Texture, encompassing both Texture Lab, which aims to create products to predict response at the touch of a button, and Studio Texture – a design studio that utilises these products. We chatted to Youngs to find out more...

Why did you decide to leave Purpose?
I love Purpose and will always be incredibly grateful for the opportunities that it enabled. But sometimes it's good to shake things up and shift into unchartered territory – you change the space of possibility. And new possibilities can be incredibly alluring.

Tell us about Texture Lab...
Our ambition is to design and build products that predict response to communication, and help improve it at the touch of a button. Our first products are on analysing language and we're also piloting improvements to chatbot interactions and even analysis of video.

How can you predict response to communication with the touch of a button?
We've blended recent advances in cognitive psychology, image processing and linguistic analysis with big data and machine learning.
   The user's experience is simple. They tell the machine what they want to achieve with their communication through a series of intuitive sliders. This 'brief' becomes the lens for the machine to analyse data and predict response. It then makes intelligent recommendations to better achieve the brief.

How will Texture Lab's products be used?
We'll be using them in Studio Texture, helping us iterate faster and create more effective communication. We also hope to license them to other agencies and to clients.
   Our pilots have shown staggering results. I used one product on a selection of brand propositions that had been written for a client. The one I rejected performed the best. When we checked it through primary quantitative research, the machine was right!

Who are you collaborating with?
It was through collaborating with Dr Beau Lotto that I met my now business partner, Dr James Carney. Together we have brought in others, including the masterful planner and behaviour change specialist, Mark Cross. This richness of skills is essential for building our products and giving them credibility and authority. It's amazing what can be achieved by combining different minds.

What's the future of communication?
This is not about them or us, it's them with us. Together with machines we can achieve better things. It can be the difference between our work working, and not. I think designers and communicators will use AI as an extension of their own imaginations to supercharge their impact in the future.

What have been the challenges so far in setting up your own business?
It's time-consuming, frustrating and risky. There's no guarantee of return and the likelihood is, we'll fail. But, if it works... ◻

EVENT REPORT: TYPO BERLIN 2017

MOVERS AND SHAKERS

Dom Carter discovers how the path to creativity is seldom linear at TYPO Berlin 2017

T aking over the House of World Cultures once again, this year's TYPO Berlin had five stages and multiple workshop spaces – and was also accompanied by some apparently contractual good weather. The three-day event was centered around the idea of 'wanderlust', and boasted a suitably diverse array of speakers from around the world, many of whom had careers spanning various disciplines.

War journalist Susanne Koelbl kicked things off with her take on wanderlust – that people leave their comfort zones in pursuit of happiness and better opportunities, allowing the audience to draw their own connections with design.

This humanitarian thread was picked up by Pearlfisher's Jonathan Ford, who challenged attendees with the claim that "designers have become lazy," adding that as an industry, we're "immune to the consequences of what we're creating." He urged the audience to "use passion and belief and science and art" to build a better world that will benefit everyone.

For Typotheque founder Peter Bil'ak, the fact that design skills can be applied to many different contexts is the best thing about being a designer. Through a career that's involved creating innovative floor tiles and choreographing contemporary dances, he has realised that received wisdom about what makes good design isn't necessarily true. Challenging the idea that good work is always defined in relation to commerce, he instead argued that "good design benefits all involved parties".

Day two was about branding, and legendary designer and brand consultant Michael Johnson lead the way with a talk that focused on the human connection at the core

PHOTOGRAPHY ABOVE AND BELOW: Gerhard Kassner / Monotype

Clockwise from far left: Attendees gather outside the House of World Cultures; Peter Bil'ak explains why design is an interdisciplinary skill; Jonathan Ford on the ethical impact of creative work; Erik Kessels urges the audience to embrace their mistakes.

of branding. "Defining how your brand feels is very important," said Johnson. "You need to talk as a person, not an organisation."

Running through his approach to branding (and blessing the venue with copies of his book Branding: In Five and a Half Steps), Johnson emphasised the need to investigate a brand's context and define why it needs to exist. "If you can't tell people why you're here, you're in trouble," he stated.

Elsewhere, designer and artist Dominic Wilcox shook up the idea of normality with a presentation of how his unusual inventions, including a helmet that scoops cereal into the wearer's mouth, have encouraged children to bring their imaginations to life and settle on career aspirations. "What you can read from this type of thinking… I don't know," he confessed.

Erik Kessels, maverick creative director of KesselsKramer, utilised a similar sense of fun in his talk on day three. Drawing a huge crowd and bigger laughs, his presentation charted a career that has seen him designing advertising campaigns for awful hotels and the famous (and often imitated) I Amsterdam typographic landmark.

Mistakes were the thrust of his talk, with Kessels pointing out that "creative people are professional clowns," and that they should embrace their errors. Working in advertising is arguably a mistake for Kessels, as he admitted he hates the industry. However, he reminded the audience of TYPO Berlin 2017's theme as a reassurance that there's always an escape route when things go wrong. "As a creative," he said, "you can cross over to a lot of different disciplines." ◻

FOOTBALL FOCUS

Nick Carson reports from thread's Premier League-themed special

Bristol-based events series thread has gone from strength to strength in the past year, with organisers Fiasco Design planning a diverse line-up for its two-day creative festival, Something Good, in the autumn.

On 18 May, however, the focus was narrow and deep. DesignStudio and DixonBaxi gave their perspective on one fascinating joint project: 2016's total overhaul of the Premier League brand.

Ever since Airbnb, DesignStudio has built quite a reputation for attracting controversy – a point that creative director Ben Wright acknowledged when discussing the tirade of abuse the agency received for "dropping the lion" (never on the cards, in fact it was brought front and centre).

Wright explained how DesignStudio turned the Premier League's reputation for "overpaid foreign players" and "ripping off fans" on its head, with the inclusive tagline: 'We all make it.'

Wright then handed the baton to DixonBaxi's Dan Capstick to discuss the broadcast graphics. "We enjoyed dropping all the 3D shiny shit that pollutes most on-air sports branding," he admitted. "The 'we all make it' vibe glued a lot of agencies together who were bringing this brand to life."

All in all it was an insightful deep-dive into one of the year's most high-profile branding projects. ◻
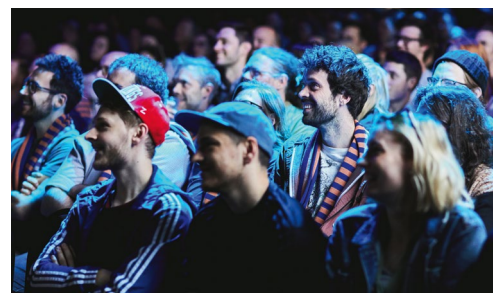
Top: DixonBaxi's Dan Capstick. **Above:** thread went to town on the theme, with scarves and inflatable footballs

NEW DESIGNERS

Check out the One Year On exhibition at London's Business Design Centre from 5–8 July

One Year On, a hotly anticipated showcase of the most exciting design talents in their first year of business, returns as part of New Designers this summer.

These 80 talented individuals have been selected by a panel of experts from across the design industry, and represent homeware, graphics, furniture, textiles, ceramics, jewellery and illustration.

The three designers featured on this page are Plymouth graduate James Rae, who used his illustration skills to help launch a start-up online rental service called PapayaPods; Benjamin Craven, whose bold, colourful Memphis-inspired prints use reclaimed wood as part of the screenprinting process; and Laura Alice, whose range of minimalist landmark icons recently formed part of a major national poster campaign.

All exhibited work is available to purchase or commission, enabling visitors to One Year On to buy directly from designers at the show. ◻

Clockwise from above: Illustration for PapayaPods by James Rae; Lisbon, by Benjamin Craven; My Icon Story, by Laura Alice.
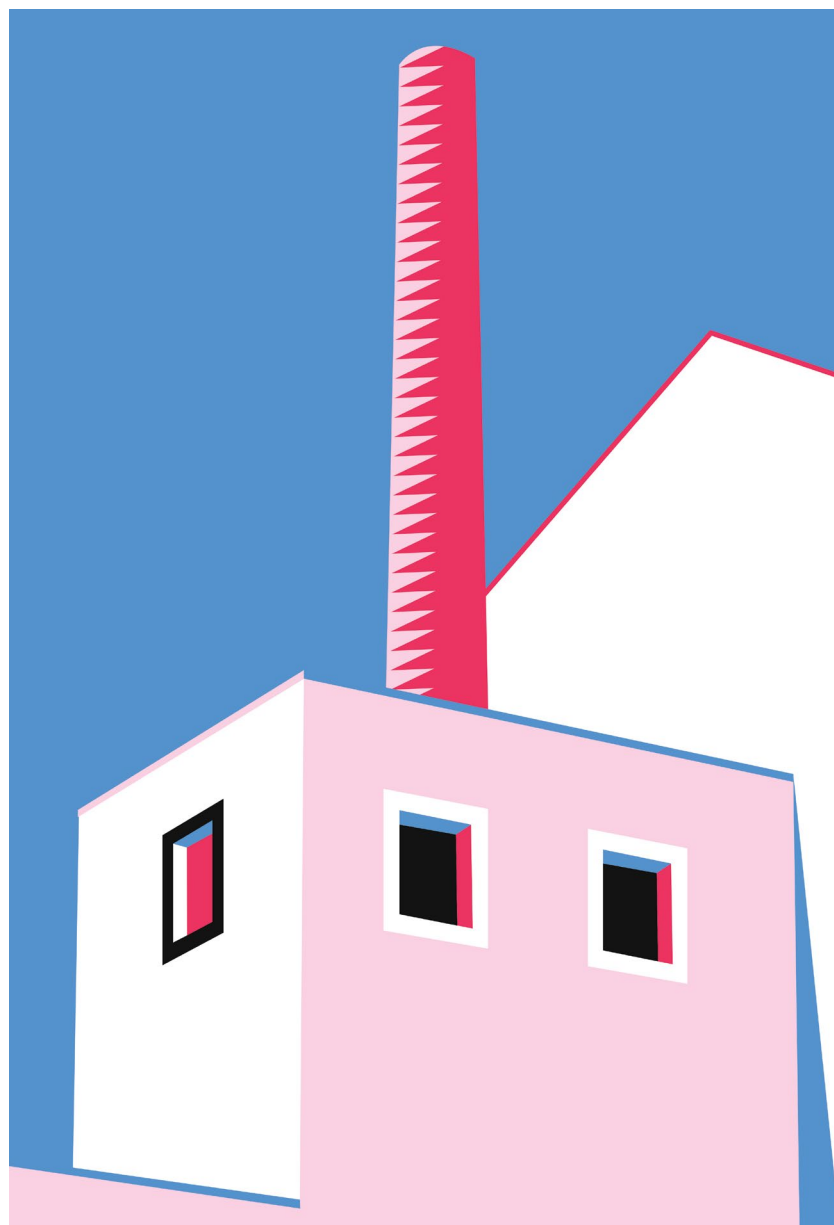
Andreas M Hansen

"Instagram is by far my favourite form of social media. I love opening the app and getting tons of inspiration thrown at me," says Danish designer and maker Andreas M Hansen, who runs his own small design agency A-SPACE. "I think the reason why I create posts is to try and inspire other people the way that I get inspired. There's nothing better," he adds.

Hansen likes taking pictures that mesmerise him, shots which he can go back to later and just stare at. He posts images solely on Instagram. "I think this is because I really like seeing how they interact with each other when they are all in one place, sitting next to each other on the grid," he explains.

His feed is minimalistic, and although it's not quite monochrome, it doesn't feature many colours. "Don't get me wrong, I love colour," Hansen insists, "but for my feed, I'm more interested in creating desaturated photos." The designer's feed mainly consists of his artwork, apartment interior shots and travel pictures. "I can't live without travel and find a lot of my inspiration while exploring new places," he states.

www.instagram.com/andreasmhansen

INSIGHT

Strong opinion and analysis from across the global design industry

SAM BECKER
ECD, BRAND UNION
www.brandunion.com

Sam spent five years as a design director at Brand Union from 2008–2013, followed by a short stint at Interbrand – before returning to Brand Union as creative director. He was promoted to ECD in 2016. With a background in development and technology, he won the inaugural IBM Watson hackathon.

LISA HASSELL
DIRECTOR,
WE ARE GOODNESS
www.wearegoodness.com

Director of Inkygoodness and We Are Goodness, Lisa Hassell has seven years' experience in the creative industry as a freelance writer, agent, producer and lecturer. She also coordinates the Birmingham chapter of Glug – to set up your own event, check out www.glugevents.com/host

Illustrations:
Louise Pomeroy
www.louisezpomeroy.com

ESSAY

How to build a lasting brand

According to Brand Union's **Sam Becker**, successful brands must be flexible and transparent, with a compelling narrative at their core

T here's hardly a project that Brand Union works on these days where, at some point, the cautionary tales of Gap or Tropicana's disastrous rebrands don't rear their ugly heads. Most know what it looks like when things go wrong, but it's a bit harder to know when and how they go right. That is especially true in the digital age. The process of launching a brand digitally may feel more routine but, as many are keenly aware, it's no less risky. As clients and agencies begin to (rightfully) cede more and more control of their brand to their customers and the connected world at large, it becomes more critical that the brand itself be built to anticipate and withstand future challenges.

Today's most resonant brands are responsive to changing conditions and unpredictable inputs. A brittle brand cannot negotiate change and will snap under pressure, while flexible brands are built around broad principles, not rote rules. Forget whether something is strictly on or off brand. Instead, ask yourself and those around you, does it feel right? Are we leaving room for our most dedicated fans and partners to wield their influence? If they're not invited, they will show up anyway and have their say, which means that brands should be prepared to steer and integrate the potential groundswell that erupts.

In addition, every context and channel needs its own experience. Brands that always do the same thing and feel the same way don't appear consistent – they appear sterile and lifeless. The richest, fullest brands elegantly straddle the digital and physical. For example, by reliably reproducing colours in the real world but meeting strict ADA standards with digital hues. A Pantone is only as good as its RGB counterpart, and vice versa. Gone are the days of falling in love with an exotic spot colour. If it can't live everywhere, it's probably not the right colour. For some, this is hard to accept.

Once a brand is built properly, it must be meticulously launched – with consistency and conviction – so that it is embraced by its communities and not savaged by its detractors in the snarkiest corners of the Twittersphere. It may seem like a soft launch is the path of least resistance, but even that can backfire. The good news is that there are a few key things you can do to bolster your brand.

A brand's best protection is a strong story that essentially serves as its reason for being. Airbnb has Bélo, its A-shaped avatar that stood for people, places and love. If you don't tell people exactly what your brand stands for, they will likely draw their own conclusions and define it for you.

Once you have your story, defend it with all your might. Tell that story with the precision of a legal case. Use any and all of the tools at your disposal, be it via GIFs, Tumblr or YouTube, and let your audience know why you stand for the things you do. Why did you choose that colour? What's the logic behind the logo and typographic system? Bring everyone along on that journey. Ideally, these questions and more are answered in a thoughtful, self-contained video that can be easily shared.

The best brands are becoming more and more transparent. Make your design guidelines public. By convincing your fans that they are as much a part of your design team as anyone at the company, you're fostering a sense of community and connection. If people understand the 'why', they're more likely to 'do the right thing' by your brand, whatever that may be.

While I have my qualms with consistency, there's still one important way that it really matters. A brand that is not consistently embraced and championed by the leaders of an organisation is a fragile one. Nowhere is fear smelled faster than on the internet. One of Gap's biggest missteps was to say, 'Oh, you don't like our logo? Well neither do we! Let's have a contest to see who can make one better.' If you don't believe in your brand, how can you expect anyone else to?

It's a testament to the leaders of Airbnb that marketers remember its recent brand launch fondly. In reality, it nearly fell apart. The best brands in the world are those that people just 'get'. They are fluid, authentic and never contrived. In reality, these brands are meticulously conceived and precisely orchestrated by their creators. They only seem natural because they've been resiliently built and co-developed with their users. If you want to shepherd a brand through the perilous corners of the internet, make sure you've got the right foundation, and a strong stomach. And remember that you can never please everyone. ◻

What other qualities do you think modern brands need to survive? Tweet @ComputerArts using #DesignMatters

> *A brand's best protection against its detractors is a strong story that essentially serves as its reason for being*

DISCUSSION

What's your biggest money worry as a freelancer, and how do you deal with it?

GRANT BURKE
Freelance designer and illustrator
www.grantburke.com

○

"As a freelancer, your next pay cheque is never guaranteed, and maintaining a full schedule can be challenging for even the most seasoned designers. It only takes a few slow weeks to cause panic, and multiple slow months could mean financial ruin. To avoid this, I focus on securing my next project before the last one has ended. Even when up against a deadline, I make time to track down leads and pitch to potential clients. During hectic weeks, this strategy can feel like self-inflicted pain, but it ensures that I rarely find myself at my computer asking: 'What's next?'"

HEATHER SHAW WILLIS
Freelance graphic designer
www.heathershaw.com

○

"Staying organised! I'm the worst at keeping track of income, expenses and receipts, and it leads to a lot of headaches and wasted time (even a penalty, once) at tax time. This past year, I created a simple Google Sheet with a tab for profits and a tab for expenses. Then I used OCR to capture, upload and label my receipts, tax forms and documents with the year and a logical title. That made it easy to quickly search and share with my tax guy. This year I'm using QuickBooks for the first time."

COLM MCCARTHY
Freelance graphic and web designer
www.colm-mccarthy.com

○

"Getting paid on time. I always agree payment details before proceeding with a project – that way there are no grey areas. For all new clients, I take a 50 per cent deposit upfront. This usually eliminates the shady ones. When working with large clients, I ask them how their payroll system works; otherwise I could be left waiting for up to two months. And the most obvious but all-too-often overlooked thing I do is try to send my invoice out immediately after a project is signed off. Any delay here welcomes a nonchalant response."

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f

LIAM BLUNDEN
The constant thought that maybe the work might dry up, so I'll need to keep a reserve – unlike those in studio employment who can rely on a set payday.

f

JUAN E. ROBLES
Sudden expenses. Getting sick and having to buy medicine, pay for car repairs, and so on.

🐦

@REALJOEWOJO
Health insurance costs in the US will eat up all of your freelancing money.

🐦

@ANTNIELLISON
Doing something I don't 'love' doing in order to pay the bills. I want/wish to be able to draw all day for money, but it's hard.

🐦

@SAMIVILJANTO
Problem: Not enough illustration skills to counterfeit bank notes. Solution: Trying hard to acquire some reference material to practise with.

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OXFAM

Redefine your happy

If you're not reaching your goals, reconsider them – says **Lisa Hassell**, agency director of We Are Goodness

All my life, I've prided myself on being a glass-half-full kind of a person. I seem to have been born with an unwavering (and sometimes irritating) ability to put a positive spin on everything, from failed relationships to frustrated clients, and as a result have faced life head-on with a kind of naive optimism – in no small part because I also happen to be a single parent.

When I decided to launch a business in 2015, my friends and family expressed their concerns, knowing full well that my experience of such endeavours was limited. Yet I trusted my gut instinct and did it anyway, and doing so has meant some of the worst and also the best times of my life. Frequently measuring my sense of self-worth by how well I have managed to juggle family life with a career has unsurprisingly challenged some of my core beliefs around how I define happiness.

Last month, I stumbled across an article about Google X boss Mo Gawdat, whose 'equation for happiness' struck a chord with me. The formula expressed in his new book Solve For Happy is as follows: "Happiness is equal to or greater than the events in your life, minus expectations of how life should be." This gave me food for thought. I realised that I had become so fixated on where I thought the business

should be, that I had lost sight of everything we had already achieved. By comparing myself to those with a five- or even 10-year advantage, I had not only placed a huge weight of pressure on our shoulders, I was burning myself out trying to keep up with impossible goals.

Expecting to hit the ground running without any bumps in the road was unrealistic, yet I stubbornly believed it was possible. No surprise then that it came as a shock when reality hit. However, while accepting our limitations and playing to our strengths has not been an easy lesson to learn, admitting defeat has been a refreshing and rewarding exercise for everyone involved. By shelving some of our more ambitious plans and refocusing on the here and now, we have afforded ourselves the breathing space to be objective about what we hope to achieve. More importantly, we also now take the time to celebrate the smaller milestones with a real sense of achievement.

As Baz Luhrmann affirmed on Everybody's Free (to Wear Sunscreen): "Sometimes you're ahead, sometimes you're behind. The race is long and in the end, it's only with yourself." ☐

Has redefining your life goals helped you become happier? Tweet your thoughts to @ComputerArts using #DesignMatters

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REBRAND FOCUS

A big idea. Condensed.
The Audi A1.

Focus on: Audi rebrand

KMS Team and Strichpunkt have created a new identity system for Audi. We get three perspectives on it from across the industry

ANDREAS ZEISCHEGG
Design director, KMS Team
www.kms-team.com

LEE DALE
CEO, Say Yeah!
www.sayyeah.com

CHRISTOPHER COLOURYUM
Freelance graphic designer
www.colouryum.com

"Working in partnership with Strichpunkt, we redesigned the overall brand appearance for all relevant touchpoints. The vision was to create a seamless experience throughout all media and devices; starting from automobile interfaces, online and offline applications, TV and classic media to print.

The new principles include flat logo, free logo placement, equally weighted brand colours, imagery reflecting people's everyday lives, vivid use of typography, technical icons and animation. All these elements allow the brand to express itself through creative diversity rather than rigid consistency.

The flattened Audi logo is not just a consequence of technical requirements, but a bold statement. It's a symbol of a new brand attitude fostering creative diversity and a shift from monologue to dialogue."

"The refinement of the logo is a step in the right direction, bringing it back to its essence: with four intersecting monochromatic rings. But the scale of the application throws everything off balance. In the initial campaign, we see big logos and giant, sprawling text overwhelming the photos of the vehicles.

Worse still, surface level copy is focused on aesthetic traits, moving away from the driving experience. This imbalance continues with support elements that are further drowned out as the stark contrast of bold, wide typography overwhelms the thin, light icons. This is made all the more haphazard by the random placement of all of these elements.

This may be all intentional, as KMS says in the case study section of its website, but that doesn't make it any more effective."

"It's a real sign of status when a logo can drop its wordmark and be globally recognised by its icon, especially when it's just four circles. Audi is now joining the likes of Apple and Nike, companies that have proved a strong brand icon doesn't need messy letters for people to recognise it. This is a beautifully clean and sharp rebrand and is very, well... German!

All the unnecessary fluff has been stripped away and flat design has been used across both digital and print applications to give a very sophisticated yet well-engineered feel. The accompanying font family is instantly recognisable as Audi and the makers clearly know that too, as they have made the bold choice not to use the logo in some of the material. BMW, it's your move."

Beauty
and the
beast
The new Audi TT Coupé

Audi Vorsprung durch Technik

Audi's rebrand pares its 'polished chrome' interlocking circles (above top) back to basics, as part of a diverse toolkit of brand elements – shown here applied across everything from app interfaces to ad campaigns.

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Q7

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Benutzername

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Willkommen bei myAudi

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Passwort   Vergessen?

Anmelden

I had a dream

SHOWCASE

Computer Arts selects the hottest new design, illustration and motion work from the global design scene

INSTRUMENTAL DESIGN

THE METROPOLITAN ORCHESTRA IDENTITY
by byHAUS
www.byhaus.ca

Montreal-based firm byHaus has modernised symphony orchestra The Metropolitan Orchestra (Orchestre Métropolitain) with a playful new identity. The new logo is a monogram that compromises two letters: one an elegant, high-contrast serif; the other a dynamic graphic device through which various instruments appear.

"The Orchestra never had an identity, per se," explains byHaus associate Philippe Archontakis. "They had a logo and a pink colour, but that was pretty much it. Each year, they graphically improvised promotions with what they had. It lacked cohesion. The brief was to revisit their logo and develop an identity system," he says.

With many decision-makers involved in the process, one of the biggest challenges for byHaus was to convince everyone of the new strategy. "Another was to persuade the client that, from now on, the public will name the orchestra 'OM' instead of The Metropolitan Orchestra," adds byHaus associate Martin Laliberté.

OM
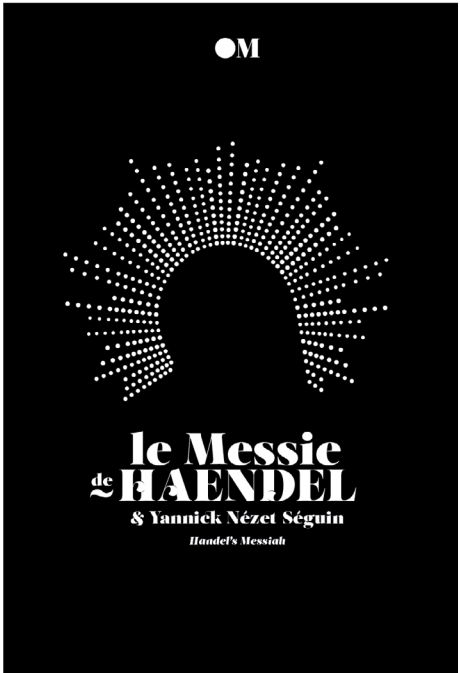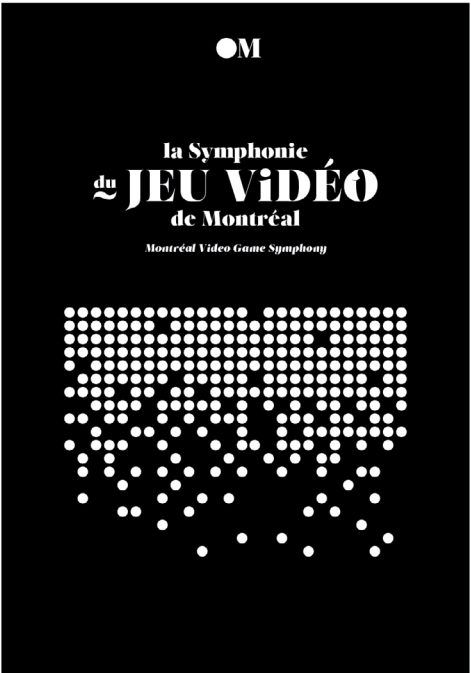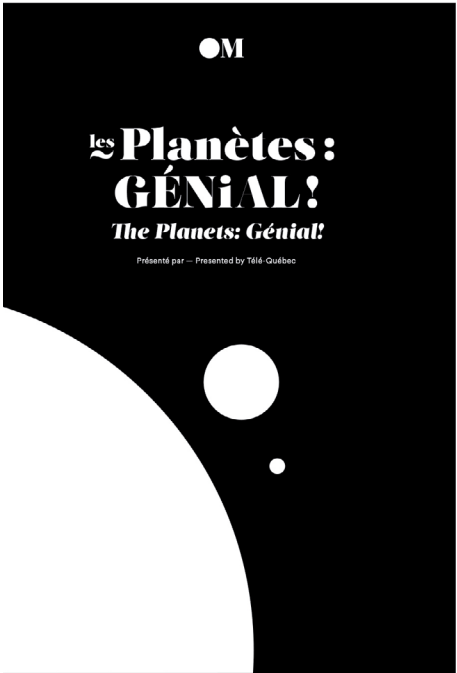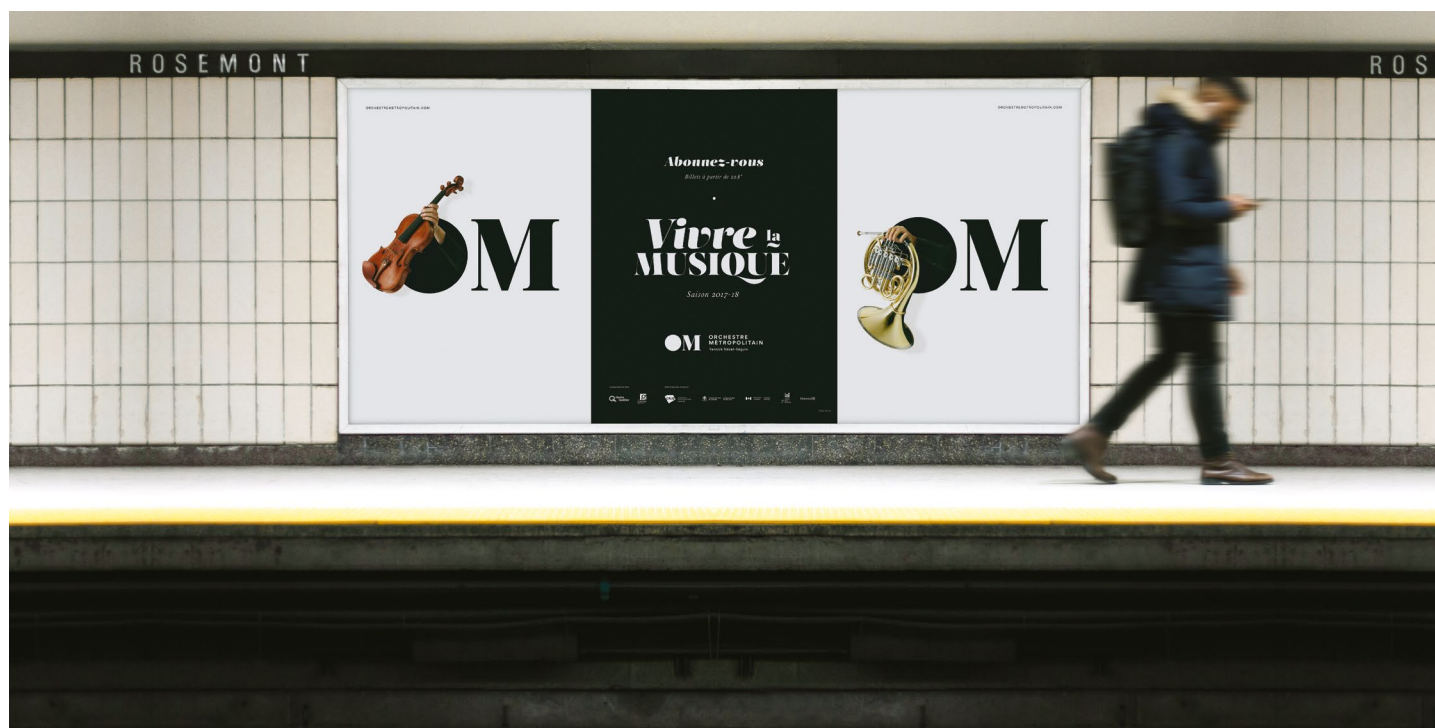
The elegant new Metropolitan Orchestra identity makes clever use of its circular graphic device, which features in everything from programmes to animations.

The OM identity also features atipo foundry's beautiful Didone-style typeface, Salomé.

The identity gives classical music a sense of playfulness and accessibility, as shown in these engaging underground posters.

Whether printed in 2D or created in 3D as part of stage furniture, the OM monogram is both elegant and stunning.

PRETTY PENNE

PASTAFARIAN BRANDING
by Ryan Panchal
www.behance.net/ryanpanchal

Pastafarian is a conceptual pasta brand that takes inspiration from reggae culture. Created by Bristol-based designer Ryan Panchal, the personal project offers an alternative take on traditional pasta packaging – which is why you won't see any Italian flags or big windows here.

"I most enjoyed making the business cards, which were triplexed using six pieces of GF Smith Colorplan paper – two green, two yellow and two red – to give the cards a nice chunky feel," says Panchal. "Making the type work in a small area was a nice challenge. But the brand allowed me the flexibility to move the characters about and rotate them to fit any area – much like the characteristics of pasta," he explains.

WONDER YEARS

PETROL STATION SUPERGRAPHICS
by Craig & Karl
www.craigandkarl.com

Tasked with reinvigorating a disused and derelict petrol station in London's White City, design duo Craig & Karl transformed the venue with a psychedelic series of supergraphics. "We based our idea on the notion that this is the petrol station's wonder years, or a new beginning," says Karl. "It's unmistakably still a petrol station – at least in form, if not function – so we used associated language, such as striped awnings or arrows, but in a freer, more expressive way."

The new graphics suggest a multitude of possibilities for the site, which will be used as an event space. "The colour palette also references a TV test screen as a nod to the adjacent Television Centre," he adds.

TIME FOR TEA

FORTNUM & MASON PACKAGING
by Design Bridge
www.designbridge.com

Briefed to reimagine the packaging for Fortnum & Mason's core range of biscuits, Design Bridge set about exploring the iconic store's rich visual archives. The six new designs put a contemporary twist on the decorative ceramics and fine china associated with British teatime.

"We've added strong, vibrant colours to the pattern to give it a contemporary feel," explains design director Chloe Templeman, "and have applied the colours in bold blocks that don't always match up with the edges of the pattern, adding energy and a sense of discovery."

Combining metallic and non-metallic colours adds further depth, while a debossed square in the middle of each design operates as a consistent and calm focal point. "The result is a range of tins that feel so special and considered that people want to show them off next to their finest china instead of decanting the biscuits onto a plate," she adds.

FOODIE FOCUS

SUMMERHILL MARKET IDENTITY
by Blok
www.blokdesign.com

Family-run boutique grocery store Summerhill Market was looking for a new identity that would be more in keeping with its spirit. "Apart from the quality of its foods, what made Summerhill Market such a beloved destination was its attentive and personable service," says Blok's Steven Tachauer. "We set out to reaffirm its value with a new contemporary clarity that retained the brand's warmer traits."

Blok redesigned Summerhill's logo and packaging system, with a focus on aesthetic clarity. "Patterns inspired by textures found in food provide a deliberate juxtaposition to the clean lines, and bring an emotional experience to the identity," says Tachauer. "A monogram honours the store's heritage, while the line 'Your Other Kitchen' reinforces its role in customer's lives."

Echo

Ecjo

San

dr o

&

TOM BURR

DUNCAN FALLOWELL

SAM TAYLOR-JOHNSON

YES

JOSEPHINE PRYDE

VITALIE TAITTINGER

ADRIAN DANNATT

NO

SANDRO

Without Voice Without Place

48

The first two "Brutalist Bulletin Boards" were made in 2001 as part of my exhibition "Brutalism" at Galerie Neu, Berlin. A third board was made a few years later from the same original source material of both photographs I took and photographic material I gathered at the time. The imagery pinned to the boards is anchored in a specific place, New Haven, Connecticut, where I was born in 1963, and where there exists a proportionately large number of Brutalist-style buildings — by Paul Rudolph, Kevin Roche, Marcel Breuer, and others — all dating from the 1960s. In December of 1967 Jim Morrison was arrested during a concert in New Haven for obscenity and incitement to riot. In 1970, the album *Morrison Hotel* was released, with the track "Peace Frog" containing the lyrics, "blood in the streets in the town of New Haven." Tom Burr

B

BODY

S

A

M

DEFIANT DESIGN

YES & NO MAGAZINE
by Pentagram
www.pentagram.com

Pentagram partner Domenic Lippa and associate Jeremy Kunze have designed the inaugural issue of quarterly arts, culture, science and progress magazine, YES & NO. Aimed at those dismayed by the stark choices that have defined the police landscape in the last year, the publication intends to raise questions – and the design is as provocative as the content.

Deliberately striking against traditional magazine structures, the cover – which has no masthead – acts as a blank canvas for the logotype; while inside, ads are replaced with typographic interventions.

"As a new magazine, the biggest challenge was establishing our design voice," says Lippa. "We experimented with quite a few cover directions, but liked the idea of a moving masthead that will evolve over time. We also wanted the design to be a bit challenging but at the same time confident and intriguing."
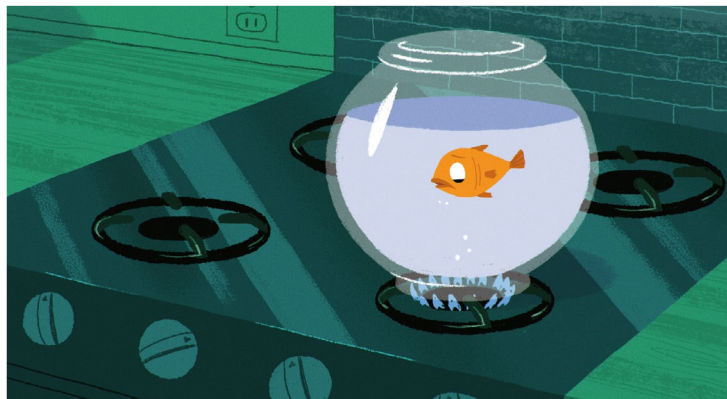
EARTH DAY

STATE OF THE PLANET ANIMATION
by Brikk
www.brikk.se

Briefed by the Stockholm Resilience Centre to create a short film about the current state of planet Earth, animation studio Brikk used a Golden Book-style aesthetic to bring the latest scientific data and research to life. "They wanted to create a playful, engaging film that creates optimism and hope," recalls executive producer Sofia Bohman.

With the help of illustrator David Saracino, the Brikk team went against the flat, vector-centric aesthetic often seen in videos, instead using traditional drawing, painting and texturing techniques. "The biggest challenge was to keep the animation style consistent, due to the amount of scenes in the film. Several people worked on it," says Bohman. "That makes the process trickier – but also a lot more fun."
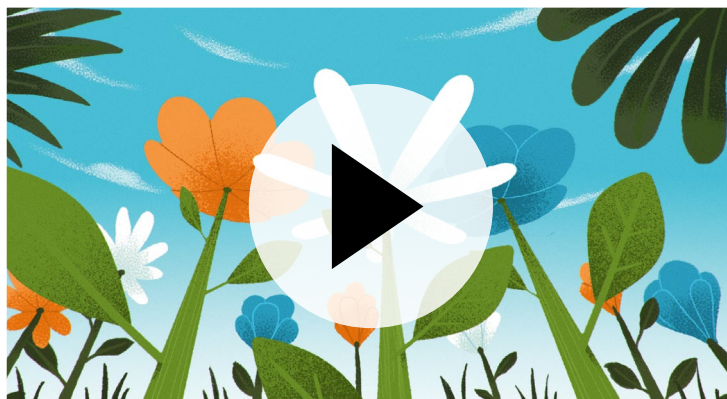
VIDEO CONTENT

KEEPING IT FRESH

BAUGASM POSTERS
by Vasjen Katro
www.instagram.com/baugasm

Just over a year ago, Albania-based designer Vasjen Katro challenged himself to create a visually "mind-blowing" poster every day, using different techniques to create unique results each time. Unsurprisingly, the biggest challenge was producing consistently good designs without repetition. "I had to come up with different techniques and experiment with different styles almost every day," he explains.

One advantage of the project is that Katro learned a lot of new software, including Cinema 4D and After Effects. "I've also connected with so many people on Instagram, which is where I post all the posters," he says, adding that the project was such a success, he's extending it for a second year. You can follow his progress on Instagram.

CASH IN AS A
FREELANCER

BRYCE BLADON, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF
CLIENTS FROM HELL, SHARES HIS EXPERT ADVICE
FOR MAKING MORE AS A FREELANCER

ILLUSTRATION: Marco Goran Romano,
www.goranfactory.com
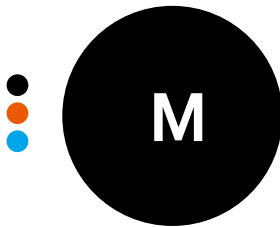
Most designers choose to freelance because they love their craft and they want the freedom to do it on their terms. That, or they loathe the foibles of traditional employment, like the nine-to-five grind, meaningless meetings, or how Greg from marketing thinks his wacky ties are the same thing as a definable personality trait.

Whatever your reason for freelancing, it always comes with a cost: responsibility. Quite simply, the financial side of running your own business is difficult. There's a lot to know, and even more that can go wrong. That said, freelancing can empower more meaningful work, a better work-life balance, and a bigger bottom line. It's never easy, but it is almost always worth it.

Over the following six pages, I'll explore the four most common financial challenges that freelancers face on a daily basis – and how you can overcome them effectively...

BRYCE BLADON
A creative communications specialist, Bryce Bladon is editor-in-chief of cult blog Clients From Hell – documenting the (often hilarious) trials and tribulations of freelancing. His new book, Hell to Pay 2: A freelancer's guide to taxes, money and more! is now available as a digital book. www.clientsfromhell.net

DEFINE A PRICING STRUCTURE

WORKING OUT HOW MUCH TO CHARGE DOESN'T HAVE TO BE DIFFICULT

The cliché formula is that time equals money, but as a freelancer, your time is worth more than just a financial figure: it's the opportunity to experiment, to build relationships, and to make room for what really matters to you.

That said, tying a financial figure to your time is an important aspect of making the most of your working hours and ensuring you don't go bankrupt.

"Understand that you're really selling time, since services take time to provide," says Josh Hoffman of Epic Freelancing, an online community for freelancers. "Whether you actually charge per hour or not is one thing, but it's imperative that you get a handle
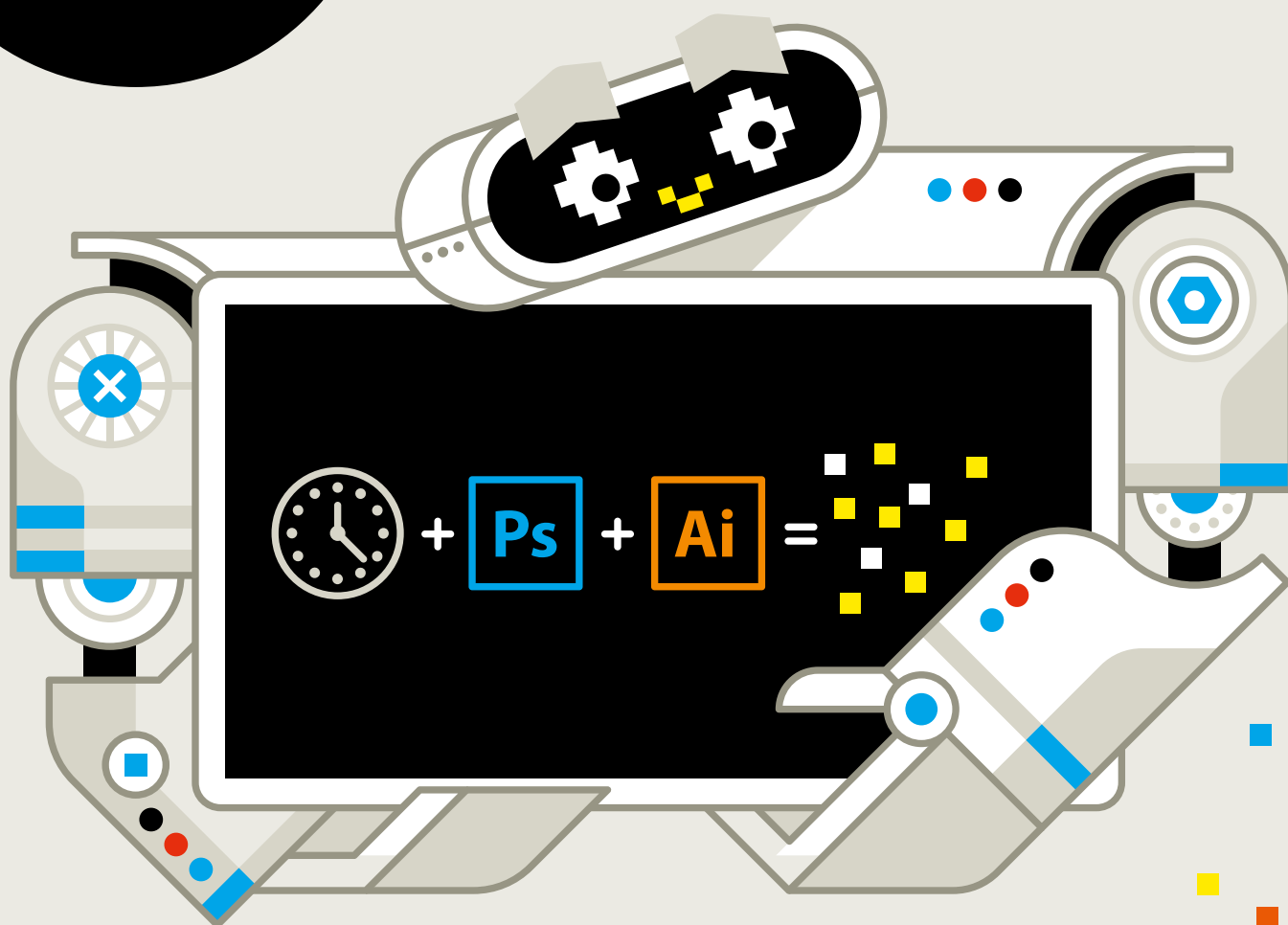
FEATURED CREATIVES

JOSH HOFFMAN
Josh Hoffman is a personal branding and digital marketing expert. He runs Epic Freelancing, where he shows people how to build a freelance life they love.
www.epicfreelancing.com

BRENNAN DUNN
Brennan Dunn is the founder of Double Your Freelancing, a community that has helped over 40,000 freelancers master the business behind their business.
www.doubleyourfreelancing.com

LEIF ABRAHAM
Leif Abraham is a former freelancer and current co-founder of AND CO, an app for freelancers that helps them run their business from proposal to payment.
www.and.co

JOE PHELAN
Joe Phelan is a multidisciplinary freelancer based in the UK. Specialising in branding and illustration, he has over 10 years' experience in the freelance game.
www.joephelan.co.uk

on how much time you're investing relative to how much you're making."

Assuming you're a full-time freelancer, the simple way to calculate your hourly rate is to take what you want to earn in a year and drop the zeroes. If you want to earn £45,000 this year, you need earn at least £45 for every hour you spend on your business.

The maths to get to this figure is simple. If you take two weeks of holiday a year, then you've got 50 weeks in a year left. Working 40 hours a week, you've got 2,000 billable hours a year.

Cut those billable hours in half because (at least) 25 per cent of your time will go into business upkeep, such as marketing your services and invoicing (and chasing) clients, and roughly 25 per cent of your income will go on things like taxes, a pension and insurance. These incidentals add up to approximately 50 per cent of your time.

That's why you can take what you want to earn in a year (e.g. £45,000) and divide it by the 1,000 billable hours in a year to reach your hourly rate (e.g. £45 per hour). Remember, these are ballpark estimates, not fine-tuned figures. You can adjust this basic idea to take into account how much holiday you want to take, how many hours you plan to work per week and how much you pay out in tax, insurance, and so on.

You can bill a client by the hour, day, week, or month. You can even bill by project or deliverable. In my experience, the most common billing method is by the hour. Charging by the hour makes sense when you're first starting to freelance because it's so simple and easy. Clients don't need an explanation for what's being provided; they are quite literally paying for your time.

However, hourly billing has shortcomings. Tracking your time in hourly increments can be useful, but it's also an easy way to lose focus. Clients tend to nitpick the details of your invoice with this style of billing, which can become a time sink. This is particularly true with short billing periods, as you reveal more about how

I SUBMITTED A FINISHED WEBSITE, AND WAS JUST WAITING TO BE PAID. CLIENT: "BY THE WAY, WE ALSO NEED TO HAVE THE WHOLE WEBSITE AVAILABLE IN RUSSIAN TOO. ONCE YOU GET THAT DONE, I'LL PAY YOU."
FROM CLIENTS FROM HELL

you're spending your time. It's easy for a client to look at your itemised invoice and systematically dismantle its contents. Some clients will begin to micromanage you, or even worse, undervalue what you do.

Also bear in mind that as you move forward in your career, you'll get better at what you do. You'll be able to do it faster too. Your reward for being better should be working less, but instead, an hourly rate starts to slow you and your earnings down. It also discourages regular clients, because if you're better and faster than you used to be, you should be charging more – but most clients will squirm at a rate increase.

"If you can do the highest quality work, in half the time, you should be paid the same or more than the other guy," says Leif Abraham, co-founder of AND CO, an app that supports freelancers. "Instead of raising your rate, you should structure your gigs to charge for the value you deliver." That's why most first-time freelancers charge clients according to the time put into a project. More experienced freelancers charge for both time and effort, and are also better at convincing clients they can deliver value.

SIX STEPS FOR DEALING WITH CHEAPSKATES
WHAT TO DO WHEN A CLIENT JUST WON'T PAY UP

Over 70 per cent of freelancers say a client has stiffed them on their invoice. The best way to avoid these cheapskates is to use a solid contract and get paid upfront. But, if preventative measures have failed you, here are six steps for getting what you deserve.

1. DON'T WORK WITHOUT GETTING PAID
By working without pay, you remove your client's primary motivation for paying you in the first place. "If you are still invoicing for past work and you're not getting paid, immediately stop," suggests Brennan Dunn, founder of Double Your Freelancing.

2. CHARGE LATE FEES
Begin to charge payment late fees when your contract stipulates it will happen. Most invoicing software can automate late payment fees for you. Resend your invoice with the added late fees. Start sending it by email and snail mail if you don't get a response.

3. DON'T LEAVE IT ALONE
Always pursue payment truancy. Half the payment horror stories on Clients From Hell could be solved by the submitter being less polite. You're running a business, and that business needs money to survive. An automated warning that a client is about to be charged late fees is an excellent way to motivate clients without baring your teeth.

4. WAIVE LATE FEES FOR A SHORT TIME
By waiving short fees for a limited time, the combination of urgency and savings can motivate clients to pay up.

5. SEND A LETTER FROM YOUR ATTORNEY OR A COLLECTIONS AGENCY
Attorneys and collections agency are hard to ignore, but they're not cheap solutions. Consider this option as a next-to-last resort.

6. FILE WITH A SMALL CLAIMS COURT
The final option is the resolve the issue in a small claims court. Make sure the amount is worth it, as this option will drain time and a bit of money. See www.gov.uk for guides.

10 REASONS TO SAY NO

LEARNING WHEN TO SAY NO IS AN OVERLOOKED AND VALUABLE SKILL FOR A FREELANCER

Disqualifying clients who don't seem like a good fit for you should be one of your first priorities when you meet a potential client. You save time and energy you would spend learning about the client and their business. As a result, that time and energy can be spent finding better clients and bigger pay cheques.
Say no if the client…

1. Requests free work, work 'for exposure', or any other type of work that doesn't provide value to you.

2. Asks for an impossible solution, product or asset.

3. Requests for you to work below your normal rate.

4. Offers to pay in the form of project proceeds or other services.

5. Keeps expanding the scope of the work without extra pay.

6. Wants you to work on areas outside of your expertise.

7. Owes you money.

8. Has unclear objectives.

9. Has unethical or illegal requests.

10. Is uncomfortable signing a contract.

Also, if your gut is telling you not to go with a particular client, listen to it.

In general, you should pursue work that you want to do more of. If the client, industry, or style of work doesn't interest you, it's a problem. The resulting portfolio piece, case study or referrals will lose relevancy if you drift in a different direction, so always ensure you are properly qualifying your clients.

"I HOPE THAT ME NOT PAYING YOU DOESN'T AFFECT YOUR OPINION OF ME AS A PERSON."
FROM CLIENTS FROM HELL

UNDERSTAND AND SELL YOUR VALUE

HOW TO DISCOVER YOUR VALUE AND COMMUNICATE IT TO CLIENTS

Designers with less experience tend to undervalue their work. Most clients have the same bias. To them, a logo looks like a few letters, a squiggly line or two, and some nice colours. They don't see the time, effort and training that went into the final product, nor do they necessarily appreciate why a logo is worth the bill.

Ultimately, it's your job to bridge the client's 'understanding gap' and to communicate the value of your work. The best way to do this is to align your work with a client's concerns. A client's specific interests will vary from business to business and person to person, but clients usually care about the same two things: making money or saving money. "Connect the dots between how your services will put clients in a position to make more money, save more money, or ideally a combination of both," says Hoffman.

A logo is more than a two-tone symbol. It's more than a business' first impression, too. "It's an opportunity to catch people's attention in a noisy world," explains Hoffman. "By better catching people's attention, you'll be in a better position to compete in the attention economy, wherein attention is the foremost currency. In other words, you won't touch people's money if you can't command their attention."

Freelancers who have things figured out charge for the value of their work. They take the time to explain this value in terms that matter to their client.

EIGHT REASONS TO KEEP YOUR DAY JOB

A TRANSITION PERIOD BETWEEN A FIXED ROLE AND FREELANCE LIFE MAY BENEFIT NEW FREELANCERS

It's best to start freelancing part-time. Ideally, you'll already have a job or career that somehow complements your chosen freelance field. If not, that's fine too. Either way, you'll want a reliable source of income as you begin to sow the seeds for a life on your terms. Here's eight reasons why:

1. There's less pressure on your burgeoning business, which saves you stress and gives you more freedom to figure things out.

2. Any early mistakes become learning experiences, not things that ruin your now full-time career.

3. You have the time to learn business skills at a more digestible rate.

4. You can pick and choose projects without the fear of going broke. This helps you build your ideal career instead of choosing projects purely for cash.

5. You can build your savings for when you do go full-time. "Have six months of personal runway on your bank account," suggests Leif Abraham, co-founder of AND CO. "You will need some time to build up your network and make everyone aware they can hire you now."

6. You can build your portfolio. If you've been choosing your clients and projects carefully, that portfolio will be tailored and more meaningful to future clients.

7. You may be able to transition your current employer into one of your first clients. Of course, this depends on the nature of your existing job, but it's a great way to get started.

8. Going public about freelancing part-time is another great way to get your first few jobs. Finding and meeting clients – and convincing them to work with you – is time-consuming. Use any existing contacts as much as you can.

To get better at this, when you first meet a prospective client, try to understand what problem led to them hiring a designer and what they are hoping for as a result. Perhaps their outdated logo sticks out on their site like a sore thumb, and they're hoping a new one will convince their customers to pay their premium prices.

Once you have your information, leverage your work as the bridge between the initial problem and the potential solution. Doing this aligns expectations and positions you as the key to your prospective client's success. Whatever you charge, frame it with the negative implications of not fixing this problem and the positive benefits of having you solve it.

ME: "HERE'S THE PRESENTATION." CLIENT: "I LIKE IT!" TWO MONTHS AND FIVE INVOICE REMINDERS LATER: CLIENT: "I NEVER REALLY LIKED IT. IT'S NOT WHAT I EXPECTED. IT'S NOT WORTH THE MONEY."

FROM CLIENTS FROM HELL

FIGURE OUT YOUR CLIENT'S PROBLEM

WORK OUT YOUR FEE BY DISCOVERING WHAT YOU'VE BEEN HIRED TO SOLVE

Freelancers typically bill according to what others are charging or what the freelancer has charged in the past. Instead, they should be billed to the client's needs or goals, such as, 'Why does the client need this?' and, 'What are they trying to accomplish?'

Even if you ask the client these questions, their answers may not be perfect. Ambiguities often arise because the client doesn't completely know the answer, or they haven't explored the issue in great depth. You should help them find out, and if they continue to be an obstacle, try to help them understand that you're not looking to rip them off; you're looking to meet their needs and goals in the most effective way possible.

Brennan Dunn of Double Your Freelancing suggests asking yourself the following four questions: What series of events led the client to seek you out? What problem pre-empted contacting you? (Note that these first two are not always the same thing.) What effect will this problem, left unsolved, have on the client's business? And what will solving the problem do for the client and their business?

"Specifically," Dunn says, "what's the financial upside for the client if you solve the underlying problem?"

The answer to those questions will inform how you quote the client. If a client is building a website to sell tens of thousands of dollars' worth of product, they should be willing to spend a portion of that profit to make sure the website facilitates this.

Present yourself as a catalyst for the results that the client needs or wants. This way, you're not an expense: you're an investment in the client's business. They're going to spend a little money on you now because you're going to help them make more later.

Keep in mind, more money isn't always the client's goal for the project, but it is almost always a factor in the equation. Whatever your client is looking for, present yourself as a guide for the client getting there. "No one has ever paid you for design," says Dunn. "Let that sink in for a second."

"Clients hire us because they need our design to do something valuable for their business," continues Dunn. "Once you internalise that, it affects how you market yourself, how you sell, what you deliver and what you charge for it."
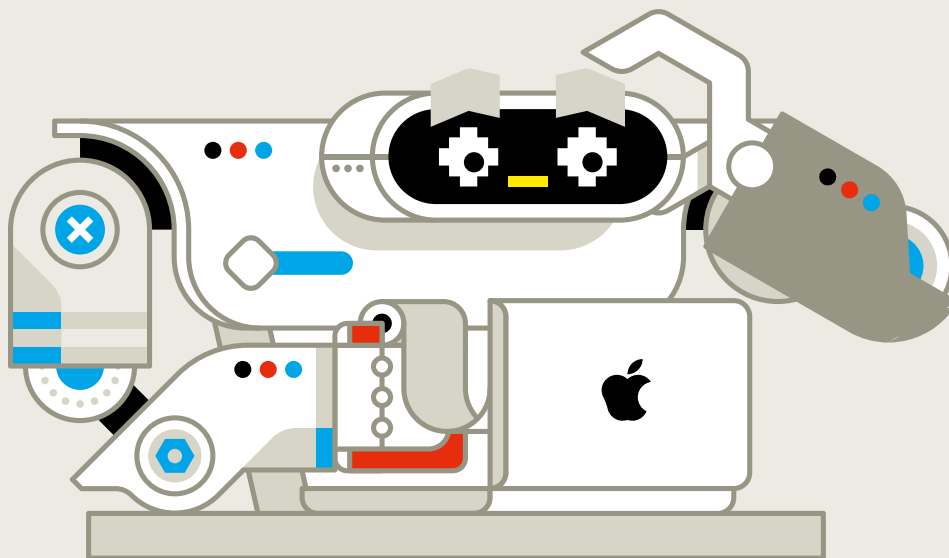
THE THREE MOST COMMON MONEY MISTAKES
MONEY EXPERTS DISCUSS COMMON MONEY-RELATED PITFALLS AND HOW TO AVOID THEM

1. CONTRACT ERRORS
"I see too many freelancers working without a contract, which in the end often leads to late or even non-payment," says Leif Abraham, co-founder of AND CO. "It's potentially the biggest money mistake they can make."

2. BANK BALANCE BLUNDERS
"Most of us come from full-time employment," says Brennan Dunn, founder of Double Your Freelancing. "Whatever money hits our bank account is typically ours to keep. When you're freelancing, you're running a small business. Businesses invest in themselves, so you need to set aside money for growth, and separate owner pay from money in the bank."

3. TIME MANAGEMENT MISERY
"Not enough freelancers understand how much time they're investing relative to how much money they're making," says Josh Hoffman, founder of Epic Freelancing. "I'm not just talking about general numbers; I'm talking about the nitty-gritty details. I keep a detailed, time sheet of all the work I do, regardless of how I'm charging… and then I use these time sheets to better estimate the scope of future projects."

LEARN TO NEGOTIATE YOUR RATE

PREPARATION IS EVERYTHING WHEN IT COMES TO MASTERING THE ART OF NEGOTIATION

Always avoid reducing your rate to accommodate a client. For a lower rate, you should be reducing the scope of your work or the deliverables. The only time your rate should be reduced without a decrease in workload is if you're getting something out of the deal that makes it worth it for you, such as a longer commitment from the client (so you don't have to spend as much time on marketing or finding new prospects) or better usage terms.

If you must negotiate your rate instead of the scope of work, start at a high figure. Few clients will say no outright. Instead, they'll try to negotiate you down. "Its far easier to negotiate down than up," says Joe Phelan, a freelance designer with over ten years of experience. "If a client thinks they are getting a good deal, more the better." In some instances, a client may forgo negotiations and just say yes. If that's the case, it's probably time for you to increase your base rate."

When you enter negotiations, don't approach it as a cutthroat, you-against-your-client scenario. Instead, approach it as you would any other project. Work with your client to define the scope and deliverables, and negotiate your rate from there. This exercise gets the client mentally and emotionally invested in the idea of your services and what you can accomplish together. If the client's budget doesn't meet your rates, reduce the scope or deliverables, not your rate.

"With art and design being so subjective, it's best to outline the processes involved as much as possible,"
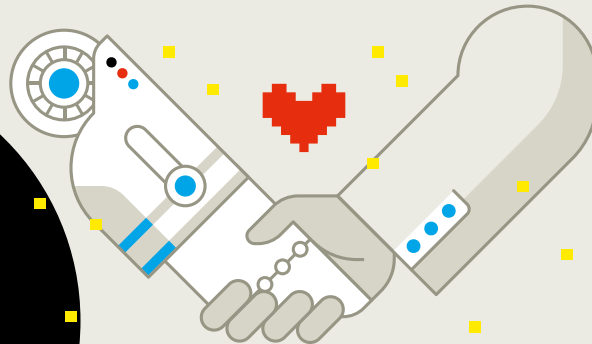
"IF WE HAD THE RESOURCES TO PAY YOU, WE'D JUST DO IT IN HOUSE."

FROM CLIENTS FROM HELL

says Phelan. "Talk the client through your thoughts and ideas. Listen to theirs. Build trust and understanding."

You should always come prepared with evidence proving the value of your services. A case study that communicates how your work solves problems or meets clients' needs is a persuasive tool and a tangible proof of concept. Salary surveys are widely available and knowing that range is always worthwhile. Professional associations are also quality resources, as are others in your industry.

Never reveal your past salary, even if pressed. Typically, a client will assign this value to you as a benchmark, and you'll be negotiating against your past self. Rather, focus on what you're worth right now. Always have your minimum acceptable rate in your back pocket and never negotiate below that.

Finally, don't underestimate yourself and your value. It doesn't matter is another designer is charging half what you are. You're not them. Your style and your various points of difference are why you command your rate, and that's why anecdotal evidence – even from quality salary surveys – should be a tool to use, not a rule to obey. ▢

N E X T MONTH

GET YOUR FIRST JOB IN DESIGN
Graduating this year? We reveal how to navigate the most common routes into the design industry.

THE CIA'S 10 WAYS TO SPOT SABOTAGE

THE CIA HAS SOME SOUND ADVICE FOR IDENTIFYING CLIENTS WHO ARE WASTING YOUR TIME

People often confuse being busy with being productive. When you run your own business, there are some insidious habits that are closer to self-sabotage than a meaningful use of time.

An unexpected illustration of what this looks like was declassified in 2008: the CIA's 1944 Simple Sabotage Field Manual. Within the manual is a section for spies to ruin productivity in foreign organisations without being caught. If your clients seem to be taking the manual's advice for sabotage a little too far to heart, make certain you are billing them for all the time they're wasting. The manual's advice includes the following:

1. Make 'speeches.' Talk as frequently as possible and at great length. Illustrate your points by long anecdotes and accounts of personal experiences.

2. Refer back to matters decided upon at the last meeting and attempt to reopen the question of the advisability of that decision.

3. When possible, refer all matters to committees, for 'further study and consideration'. Attempt to make the committees as large as possible – never less than five.

4. When training new workers, give incomplete or misleading instructions.

5. Hold conferences when there is more critical work to be done.

6. Do your work poorly and blame it on bad tools, machinery, or equipment. Complain that these things are preventing you from doing your job right.

7. Give lengthy and incomprehensible explanations when questioned.

8. Act stupid.

If you are displaying any of these traits, you might want to consider a career in middle management.

SEEING THE SIGNS

How sign maker **Luke Stockdale** uses his knowledge of branding and typography to create beautiful architectural signs that aim to raise the standard of the industry

LUKE STOCKDALE_ Australian-born Luke is the owner and creative director of Sideshow Sign Co, a Nashville-based team of designers and fabricators who specialise in custom sign making. He is also the creator of the Church of Sign Tology, a comprehensive online guide to sign making. www.sideshowsignco.com

■ WORDS: Dom Carter
■ PHOTOGRAPHY: Gregg Roth (main); Marian Venceslá (02, 12); Roo Boy (03, 07, 08, 09, 10, 11); Jon Contino (04); Dan Lewis (05, 06)

01

02

01 Luke made the leap from branding and typography to sign making after helping his mum build a home in the wake of Black Saturday – a series of bush fires in Australia.

02 Stockdale's sign-making resource, the Church of Sign Tology, needed its own sign.

03 Creating a sign with exposed lightbulbs can cause all sorts of logistical headaches, though this does depend on where you're making it.

According to Aussie-born designer Luke Stockdale, signs are not what they used to be. In response to people "caring less" about signs and the craft of sign making, Stockdale's Nashville-based creative design and fabrication company, Sideshow Sign Co, strives to improve the profile of the signage industry, and get both designers and clients demanding better signs.

On top of running the business side of things, creative director Stockdale wants to popularise sign making. With his online resource, the Church of Sign Tology, he's gathered together information about the sign-making process to make a comprehensive and honest guide.

Following his enlightening talk at TYPO Berlin (see page 16 for our full report), Stockdale chatted to CA about the economics and craft of sign making, and how these factors affect the industry…

You talk about making street signs great again. Where do you think sign making has gone wrong?
With everything that's a craft, or anything that's manufactured, everyone just cares less. This isn't exclusive to signage. Designers and clients care about consumption and cost and what they can have and

what they can get away with. So in the old days you couldn't cut corners, it wasn't even part of the culture. It wasn't even considered. Nowadays that's the main consideration.

There's also no watchdog for signage. And that's why I sort of feel responsible as a designer and a sign maker. I feel like if someone is going to expose the industry for being in a coma, then it's got to come from inside the design world. I think signage has just suffered along with everything else, but there's no one out there to stop the work getting cheaper and cheaper.

Is that why you established the Church of Sign Tology, to make sign making knowledge more accessible?
I realised the design industry was trying to avoid good design because it wasn't as easily or as sufficiently fabricated, and that that's the reason designers in the industry could get away with bad design. My theory – and it could be wrong – is that once the industry started shutting out designers, that lead to a decline in quality. Plus, sign makers work with such limited materials anyway.

Do these materials restrict the type of signs you can produce?
Very much so. There are six basic materials you can use when making a sign. And coming from a branding background, I think that's just not good enough. You've got to choose

the material that best represents the brand and honours its aesthetic. Designers that cut corners are working backwards. They're basically trying to make logos that light up. That's not what a sign is.

What is a sign to you?
A sign is like a business card, it's a representation of you. Especially architectural signage, which is what I'm talking about. If architects are going to spend years and years designing this beautiful building and it costs $50 million to build, and you just go and slap a plastic box on it with a logo, that's insulting. But you don't have many options, and that's because of materials.

What do you do with clients who won't budge on materials or design?
We just send them to the other sign companies. We're only interested in working with people who are willing to push their design a little bit. Clients are usually really enthusiastic about the sign until the price kicks in. And that's the thing we're fighting against all the time because there's this new wave of consumerism thanks to the likes of Amazon, where you can get whatever you want, whenever you want it. Custom things are different. Custom things are always going to cost four times as much because you're not manufacturing two hundred thousand of them. ▶

3

04 Sideshow Sign Co has branched out beyond traditional signage with projects such as this mosaic-style artwork.

05 Stockdale has built up his knowledge of sign making on the job.

06 This tower framework sign became a charging terminal complete with illuminated lightning bolts.

07 The 'C' in this Crema sign is designed to rotate.

08 This sign for the Franklin Juice Company includes a fresh foliage texture to reflect the brand.

09 Stockdale's past experience in typography has prepared him well for sign making.

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▶ People usually come to us with honest enthusiasm for doing something different, but then are sometimes not willing to pay for it. You can't have both, it's impossible. And that's one of the reasons the industry has been able to get away with bad sign making for so long.

You went from typography to sign making, how did you find that?
It was really difficult. A lot of hours and a lot of fuck-ups went into it. Sign making has to be an obsession. If you're going to teach yourself how to make signs, especially big neon electric signs, then it has to be. The typography and the design are what drove me. It's never been about money. It's been about getting it right and understanding what makes signage works.

Is sign making a viable business?
I've consulted with people to see where I should take this business because it's hard work and I'm not a businessman, and a lot of them have said that I'm haemorrhaging money through fabrication, which is true. But I can't stop that because in order to design signs you need fabrication.

To make signs properly you have to know how to fabricate, to make samples and you have to know about materials. And you cannot do that sitting in an office, you have to do it through trial and error. In our studio, we're getting to the stage where we can start farming out some fabrication to people we trust, but only because now we really feel like we understand the materials, and you can't get that unless you do it. With stuff like that you have to have an angry client coming back and saying 'the rust is staining my wall', or 'the wood is expanding in the heat', things that you would never consider while in the office.

What other obstacles are there to producing signs?
With signage there's a lot of city ordinance and codes that you have to fight. Like in Nashville, for instance, they wouldn't allow exposed bulbs in signs, so that's been fought and just recently overturned. It's almost like lobbying in politics. The bigger sign companies have been able to penetrate the political groups and change the laws to suit them and their processes. So then

you end up with big companies being allowed to have enormous billboards that flash, but you're not allowed to have a bulb. Sometimes they'll make an exception if we prove that the design is exceptional.

Did you have any training?
Not as such, apart from asking old sign makers to show me things. I was lucky enough to do a few signs early on for Nike and a few other recognisable brands, and so people started taking us seriously.

With the first neon sign I made with my own hands, there was a client who called us and said, 'Do you do neon signs?' And I said 'Yep,' even though I didn't know how. So I took the deposit, and I learned to make neon signs.

We actually made three, and lost money, and we still do on jobs like that. Each one had a different mistake until the fourth one was perfect. The client didn't know, they just saw the finished product. But I was having the time of my life. We were so busy and I was getting to make things and I was absorbed. When you start to know half of something, everything you learn ▶

10 An example of the type of neon sign that Stockdale admires – he argues that they have an organic feel that can't be reproduced elsewhere.

11 Stockdale compares signs like this one for Edleys Barbeque to the beauty of vintage cars.

12 Typography in signage needs to be immaculate, Stockdale explains. "In order for a sign to be dimensional, it needs to have straight edges. A distressed aesthetic comes from the look of 2D print."

about it goes straight to your brain and stays there. Learning about sign making was kind of like that for me.

Are you influenced by trends?
You balance history or trends with what the client wants and the desire to do your own thing. People say our signs are like something from the '50s and '60s. They are, but it's not because they're from that time. It's because that was the era in which they used to make good stuff. It could've been any time. I'm not attracted to them for that nostalgia, I'm attracted to them because they were taken seriously and ever since then it's been going downhill. But also those old signs were so beautiful. Take neon, for example. It's glass and gas and it's beautiful. It's organic. No LED is ever going to be able to replicate it.

Are you worried that the Church of Sign Tology will result in more competition for you?
Making this knowledge more accessible or widespread doesn't mean that sign making is going to be any easier to do. Just because you know how to do something, you still need to do it a few times, there's still a lot of work that goes into it. I'm not really worried about competition because sign making does have a level of difficulty that a lot of people are going to be put off by. But also it could benefit our business by

popularising signage again. So if the design industry starts writing about signage, that can only be a good thing. There are so many books on print but so few on signage, which doesn't make sense. Signage is the same as print only more spectacular.

If there were more books or more people aware of signage, then all of these designers would be able to start putting more pressure on their clients to do better and their standards are going to go up. Even client standards will go up. A client's competition could be a shop down the road with an amazing sign, and then they'll want one too.

Can you see 3D printing affecting sign making in the future?
I'm really excited about 3D printing. It's going to change a lot. I'm not really excited about the technology itself, it's more about brand implementation. If you can come up with a crazy idea and do it and it looks great, I'm totally on board. And I think 3D printing is going to deliver that at a high quality.

Did people warn you against going into sign making?
The industry warned me! And some of the concerns such as costing are valid points. But there are 350 million people in America. If there's even one per cent of those people who care about quality and signage, they're our clients. ◻

DESIGN FOR A PUBLIC SPACE

Luke Stockdale shares his advice for making signs for outside

01 CONSIDER YOUR MATERIALS
Knowing your materials and being aware of how they react to the weather is crucial. "You can't really have wood outside, for example, and that's a problem. It's because it's organic and changes shape," says Stockdale. "But also there are some woods that are just too expensive for most sign companies."

02 READ UP ON REGULATIONS
"Laws depend on where you're based, but are often similar," Stockdale says. "The only federally policed one in the US is the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). So you have to have braille on any permanent signs, things have to be a certain size, and the logo or the word has to come off the sign a little bit so people can feel it. This is for wayfinding. For vehicular signage where people are driving over 30mph, letters have to be a certain size."

03 RESPECT THE SURROUNDINGS
"There needs to be more respect for other businesses," says Stockdale. "Having the biggest, loudest sign doesn't work. But on top of that, it's also disrespectful to everything else around it, for example architecture. A sign will be more effective if it complements the building."
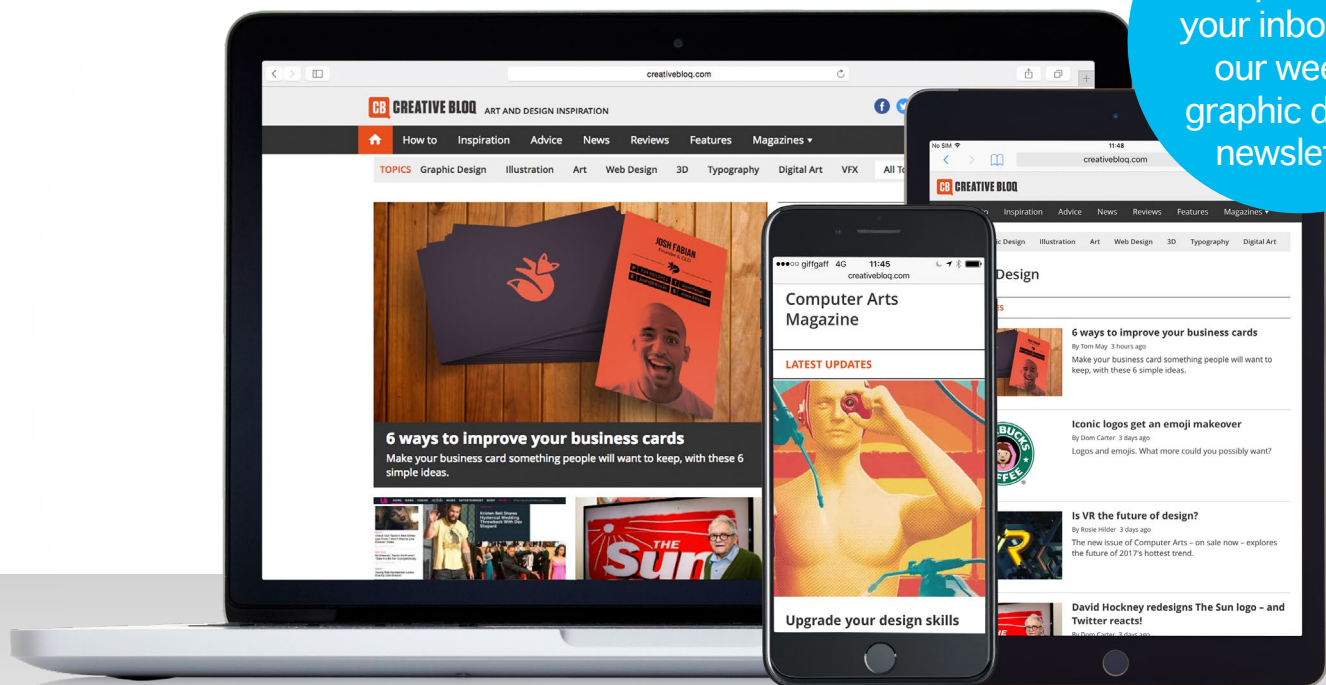
JULIAN GLANDER_BUBBLEHEAD

TON MAK_SELF-PORTRAIT
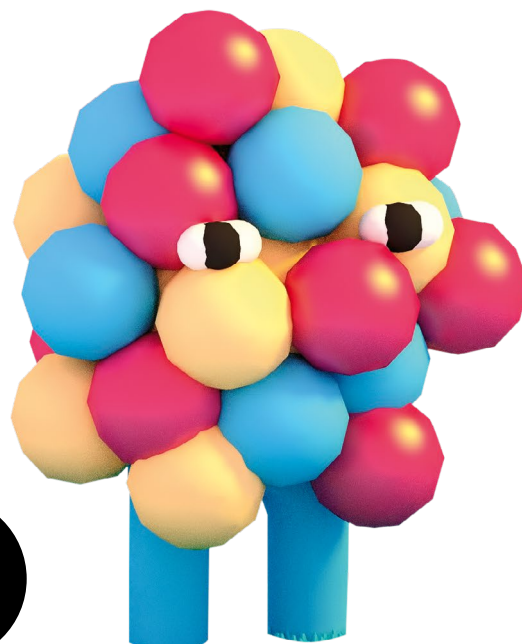
SAMUEL BOUCHER_GOODNIGHT

ERAN HILLELI_SCREENGRAB 7

NEW TRENDS IN
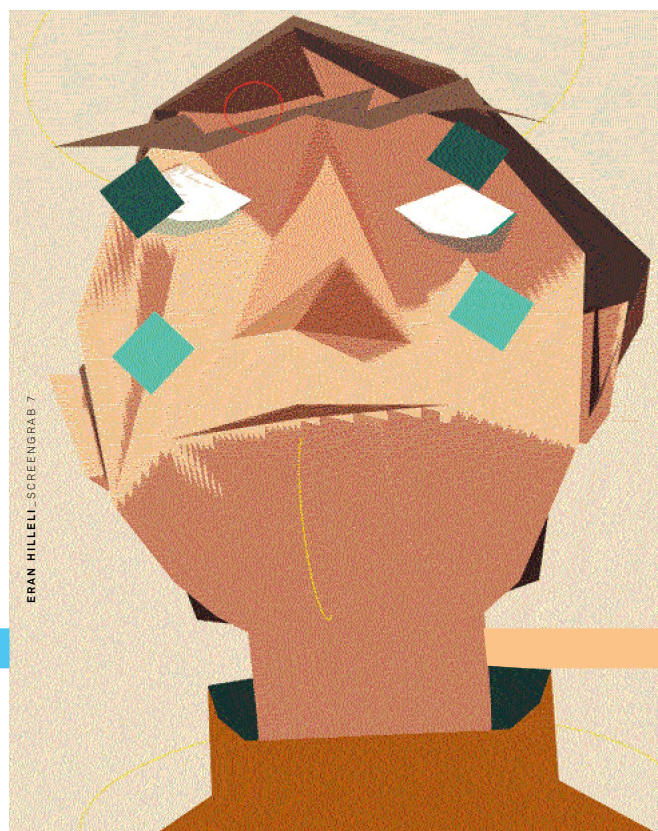
CHARACTER DESIGN

Lars Denicke and **Peter Thaler**, co-founders of Pictoplasma, reveal four exciting new directions in contemporary character design

More so than ever before, characters do not belong to their creators. As they become charged with our projection, imagination, fantasy and longing, they gain a virtual identity or life of their own, making them independent from their creators. This has arguably always been true, but in times of an omnipresent internet, the speed of their diffusion has increased. Characters now act as autonomous agents, roaming freely across media, spreading like wildfire across social networks and attaching themselves to other artefacts beyond our control. Once our creations are released into the void, we seem to have to let them go. The recent Pictoplasma Conference explored this trend; its theme was Character Upload – and the opening titles and the talks explored the challenges for artistic creation and authorship designers face in our age of extreme viral circulation.

One example embodying these issues is Sean Charmatz's Secret World of Stuff. Charmatz creates characters by using Photoshop to add simple lines to his photos of found objects, such as egg boxes, pizza, leaves and bin bags. He has a huge following on Instagram and his work is often shared without proper credit – a big issue for artists today. The reason for his viral success probably lies less in the character design itself, but in the work's ability to tell simple short stories in one image. There are silly stories, but also images related to friendship, family, death or loneliness. This emphasis on storytelling is present in many fields, from branding to interface design, and makes this an exciting time for designers and their characters.

Another character that has taken on a life of its own is Edel Rodriguez's illustration of Donald Trump, which has been featured on many magazine covers, from Time to Der Spiegel, and has been appropriated by many at political demonstrations. Rodriguez has made this Trump icon his signature, constantly recombining the colours and elements, and his viral work draws on other trends in illustration, with an eschewing of realistic depictions in favour of typographic and symbolic abstractions.

Contemporary character design is both exciting and ever-evolving. As technology advances and becomes ever more complex, designers are using these advances to go in the opposite direction – playing with their characters in ways that are perhaps simpler and more child-like than in the past. New technologies are shaping the way characters are created, and the way they interact with audiences, and as we become increasingly obsessed with our own image, tweaking the way our own 'character' or self is portrayed online, artists are reimagining faces and expressions in innovative ways.

Read on to discover more about how modern life is shaping character design, and sometimes, vice versa.

LARS DENICKE & PETER THALER
Lars and Peter are the founders and directors of Pictoplasma, an annual conference in Berlin examining contemporary character design and art. They have published numerous books and curated exhibitions worldwide. In 2013, they started the Pictoplasma Academy, with an annual masterclass and short courses. _academy.pictoplasma.com_

KEY TREND #1

ILLUSTRATING WITH 3D SHAPES

HOW GEOMETRIC SHAPES AND 3D SOFTWARE
ARE MERGING WITH TRADITIONAL ILLUSTRATION

JULIAN GLANDER_TUBE DUDE
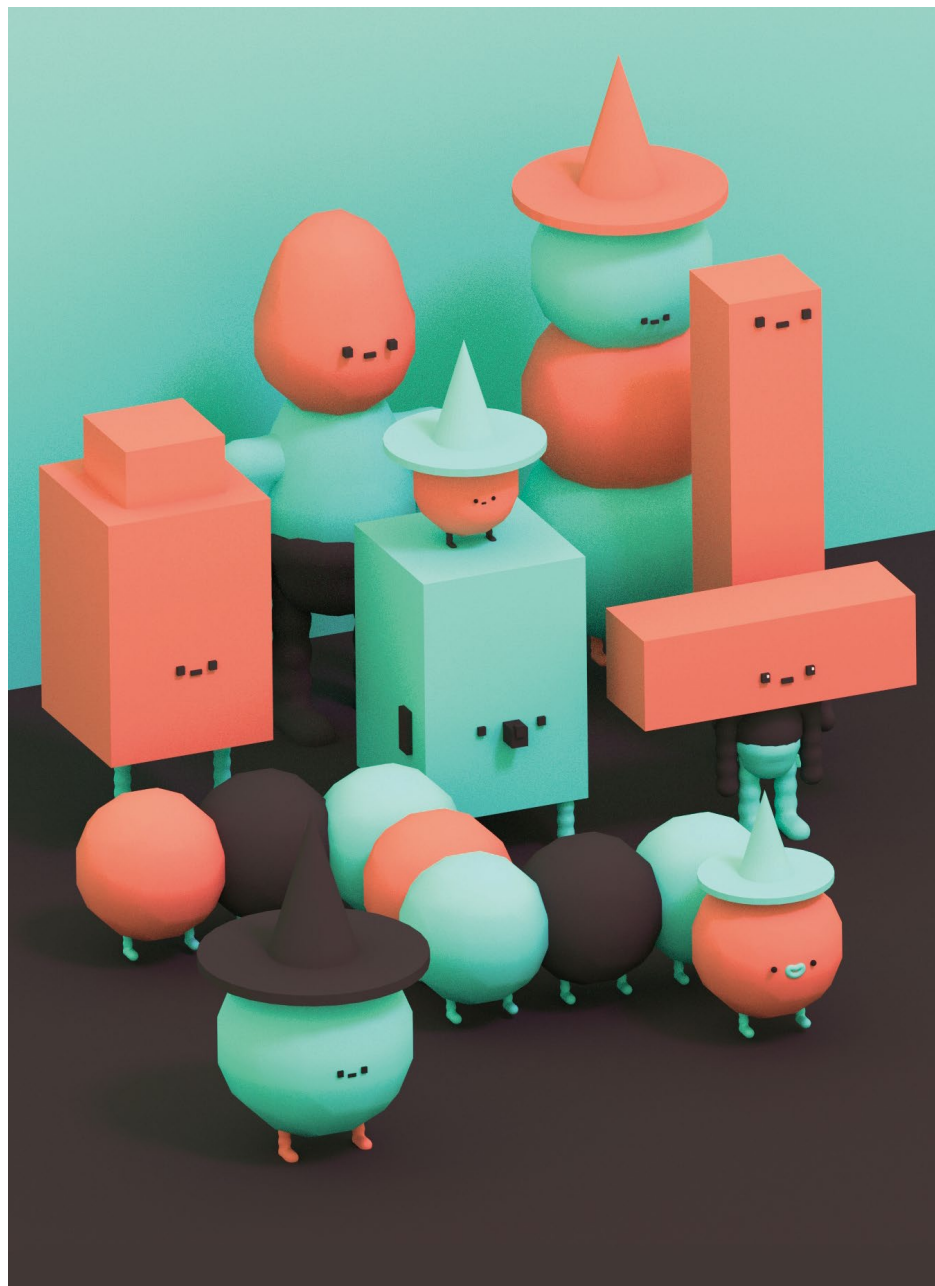
JULIAN GLANDER_HAPPY SQUAMILY

In many cases, character design is about breaking down shapes into geometrical forms. This is one of the fundamental rules of animation production, and has been essential for enabling international teams to work on the same thing in different places. Currently playing with such geometrical elements for character design in an inspiring way are 3D illustrators. In sharp contrast to the hyper-realistic simulation that has long been dominant in 3D, artists can have fun experimenting with a simple way of juggling geometrical forms to create pleasing new characters

Jack Sachs, who recently moved from London to Berlin, works as animator and illustrator. He studied illustration at Camberwell College of Arts, but while recovering from a hand injury, he had to take a break from traditional drawing and started making 3D work on the computer. These two practices have fused to become the work he makes today: jumbled up faces, bright colours, and lumpy shapes, inspired by the pioneers of early CGI. His 3D renders are often consciously misplaced into live action video footage, with characters emerging from a solid floor, as in his recent work SHHH! for Tate Britain.

Cecy Meade from Monterrey, Mexico, has a similar approach – exposing the geometric configuration of 3D modelling. Her works often depict characters head-on and in a less dynamic way than Sachs – leading to a direct confrontation with the viewer. Like many 3D illustrators, she constructs her work based on hand-drawn sketches, which she then reconfigures in geometrical elements.

Julian Glander, from New York, works in various genres, including comics, video games, short films and illustration. He never sketches, but combines simple geometric shapes straight in the free and open-source 3D software Blender. His pastel toned, yet vibrant Florida colour palette stands in contrast to the often violent and dystopian undertone of his work.

CECY MEADE_BELLOTAS

CECY MEADE_BEREN JENO

CECY MEADE_TOXIC BOY

JACK SACHS_SHHH! FOR TATE BRITAIN
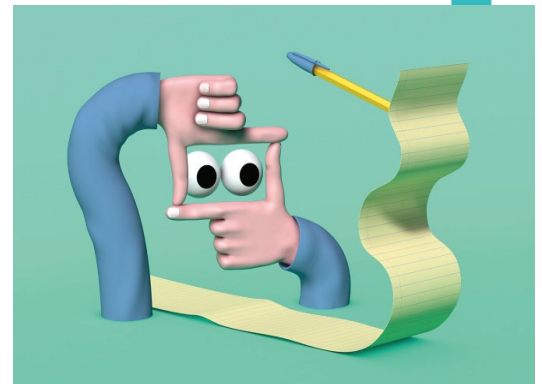
JACK SACHS_ILLUSTRATION FOR NEW YORK TIMES

JACK SACHS_INSIDE YA HAND FOR PICK ME UP

EXPERIMENTING WITH FORMS
JACK SACHS

"When I'm making work in 3D, I'll often begin with a sketch. I start my 3D image by filling in the rough forms using Platonic solids such as cubes and spheres. Once I have the rough shapes in place and can move around them in 3D space, new ideas often present themselves as the blocked out forms – still largely abstract – combine in fun new ways. This is a process that repeats continually while I'm constructing the image – adding or removing elements opens doors to completely new ideas to the point that I sometimes find it hard to know when an image is complete! Often I'll spend time creating assets that don't end up getting used, but I keep a folder of these surplus models to refer back to for other projects."
www.jacksachs.co.uk

**KEY
TREND
#2**

NEW EXPRESSIONS
IN SELFIE CULTURE

DESIGNERS ARE DRAWING ON THE CURRENT
OBSESSION FOR SELFIES TO REIMAGINE FACES

FABIOTONETTO_FACE-OFF
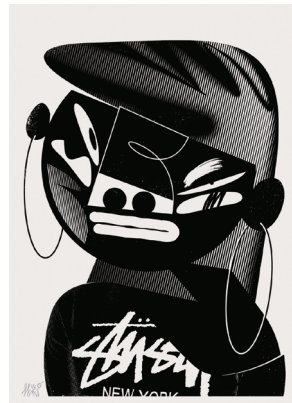
GUILLAUME KASHIMA_ALRIGHT

GUILLAUME KASHIMA_BASICS N°280
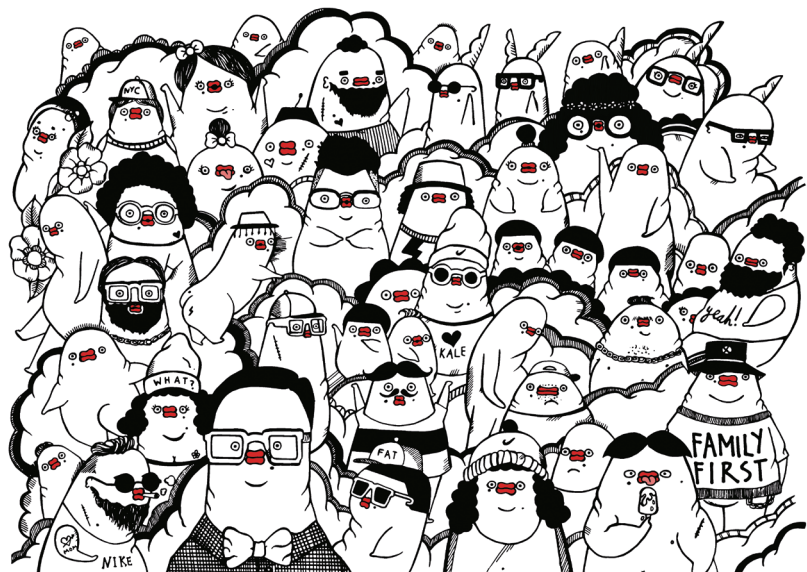
TON MAK_NTH HIPSTERS

We live in times of photographic terror. Our smartphones, the internet and the speed of data means we are constantly producing and reproducing our visual identity through selfies, and playing with it through face swapping apps, Instagram and Snapchat filters.

This selfie cult has sparked various artistic reactions. Artists and designers have come up with creative alternatives to reinvent facial representation. Italian artist Fabio Tonetto began digitally overlaying heads in photos a few years ago, while Paris-based Geneviève Gauckler has long been experimenting with the combination of mundane photorealistic objects and graphical identities, replacing the head in photos with simple geometric shapes, or combining elements to form new faces. Her work is all about nostalgia for mundane everyday objects and her love for the absurd. The simplicity of her character design emotes the feeling of being a spectator, an outsider looking at things as if for the first time.

Guillaume Kashima is a French-Japanese illustrator living in Berlin. His style is minimalist yet bold – he works mainly with black and white, plus strong, primary colours to create simple facial designs for a range of contexts. Recently, he has started to experiment with classical portraits, giving them warped facial features, multiple eyes and thoughtful poses. His Classics series of Risograph prints subvert traditional ideas and artwork by inserting playful images, such as fed up-looking naked woman farting, on classical vases.

After quitting her job in a branding agency, Ton Mak from Shanghai decided to fully concentrate on what she had been unconsciously doing most of the time – doodling. Within a short time, she simplified her style to create the expanding Flabjacks universe, a lumpy, chubby species differentiated through hairstyles, clothes and props. Their curious, ambiguous faces are a vehicle for the artist to reflect on her own identity. She also experiments with photomontage, which she bases on portraits of herself and her family.

PLAYING WITH LAYERS
GENEVIÈVE GAUCKLER

"I always work in Photoshop. I spend some time gathering footage that could fit together, such as clothes, and cut out all files. Sometimes I sketch very quickly, and then I try different things, moving around many elements. I've been using Photoshop for many years, even one of the first versions, when there were no Layers. And when Adobe said the next version of Photoshop would have a new feature called Layers, I was surprised and said to myself: 'What the hell for?' Today I'm working with a lot of Layers, but at the end of the creative process, I remove many of them. Simplicity always goes through complexity."
www.genevievegauckler.com

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JUN SEO HAHM_SHOW CHARACTER!

**KEY
TREND
#3**

I N T E R A C T I V E
C H A R A C T E R S

EXPERIMENTS WITH TECH MEAN THAT CHARACTERS
ARE NOW ENGAGING LIKE NEVER BEFORE

ERAN HILLELI_CHARACTER SYNTH

■ COMPOSING
ANIMATIONS
ERAN HILLELI

"As animation is a bit like composing a little loopable track, I thought that it totally makes sense to use sliders and knobs to make it. The result is extremely fun, it's such a refreshing feeling to be animating in such a tactile way as opposed to using your mouse and clicking tools and buttons. Animating suddenly becomes a sort of game."
www.eranhilleli.com
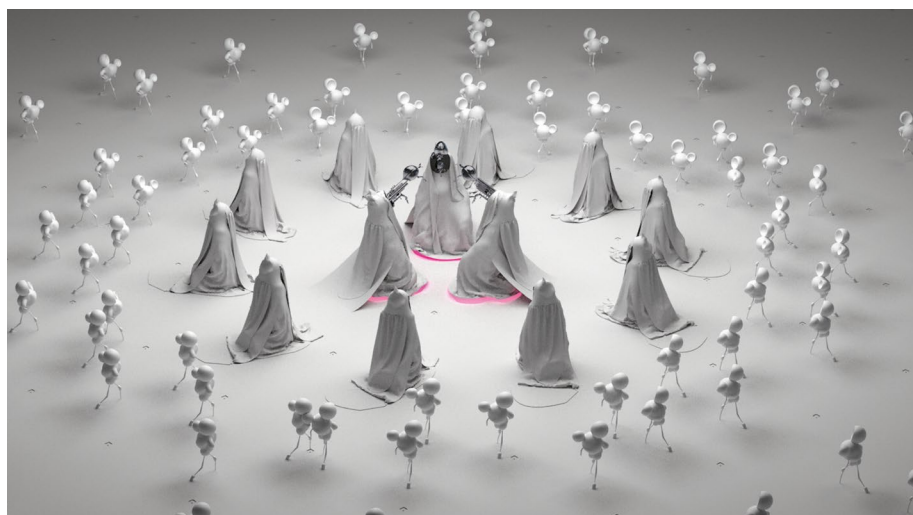
In 1994, Karl Sims, computer graphic artist and MIT researcher, released Evolved Virtual Creatures, animated videos showing creatures that had been tested to see whether they could perform a given task, such as swimming or jumping, and then evolved accordingly. They reacted to their environment and interacted with the others, similar to characters in a game. This ground-breaking work is still influential today.

Eran Hilleli, an animation filmmaker from Israel, is currently expanding his work in this direction. He is renowned for his geometric style and mysterious characters created with cinematic flair. In addition to animated shorts, music videos and adverts, he experiments with GIF loops, for example, a group of characters hibernating around a camp fire or some ethereal-looking vegetation moving in the wind. For his animated trailer for the Style Frames conference, he first tested the walking cycles of his characters constructed of geometric shapes to see if they felt organic. From this exploration, he put together his cast of eclectic characters for the parade featured in the animation.

Hilleli's latest exploration Character Synth is an interactive installation, in which a male character is portrayed on a computer screen. Visitors can sit at the desk to interact with the character through a midi controller, which operates oscillating sine waves and random noise and results in the character

ERAN HILLELI_WALKERS

deforming as if injecting waves into its bones. By combining different commands through the midi, players can observe endless different ways of transformation, meaning that Character Synth is a system that can be stimulated and interacted with, rather than a linear animation with different options that tell a story.

Another animation artist expanding his practice is Mate Steinforth, creative director at Berlin studio Sehsucht. His Instagram feed is an exploration of the behaviour of detached parts in a hyperrealist rendered setting – hands float through the air, geometric forms bounce at each other, a face is a Tinder screen to swipe through. These clips are neither interactive, nor based on a programme within a system; they rather seem experiments of Technoself Studies, singling out specific contexts of our cultures and letting them spin in autonomous loops.

Based on such experiments, Steinforth worked on the animated trailer for the recent Pictoplasma Conference. He created a cast of occult monks and allowed them to move through void 3D environments. Following this research of the behaviour and movement of his characters, he created the final animation.

Seoul-based animation director and media artist Jun seo Hahm adds a biological perspective to this type of research, replacing real creatures in the natural world with artificial ones in a CG environment. He examines the behaviour of simple forms and how their movement is based on their restrictions, and his film project Walking Follows Form is a stunning expression of how a character's body structure informs its style of walking.
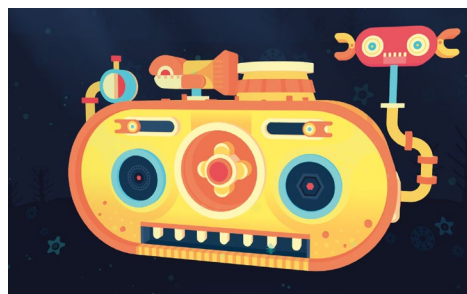

MATE STEINFORTH_CHARACTER UPLOAD

GLUMBERLAND_OOBLETS

KEY TREND #4

BREAKING THE RULES OF GAMING

HOW EXPLORATIVE GAMES DRIVEN BY CHARACTER DESIGN
ARE MAKING GAMING MORE AKIN TO CHILD'S PLAY

SAMUEL BOUCHER & KO_OP STUDIO_GNOG

USING 3D SOFTWARE
SAMUEL BOUCHER

"For GNOG, I used three main pieces of software. I did all the concept art in Illustrator, then exported each image and imported in SketchUp to start modelling the levels. I used SketchUp because it was the easiest and quickest software to learn at the time, and it also fitted my style well. The game engine we used was Unity 3D. It's very simple to use, and because of its simple UI our programmer was able to create Windows or Tools for me to make the game. Without any coding, I was able to drag and drop behaviours for different objects and create their animations directly within the game engine."
samuelboucher.tumblr.com

RÉMI FORCADELL & ARNAUD DE BOCK_PIKUNIKU

From Space Invaders to Super Mario, early computer games have been key to defining the aesthetics of contemporary character design. Games have the potential to develop a character-driven narrative, in particular when the design defines the characters' abilities to move and act within the designated world. Mainstream titles have tended to design characters to fulfil a function in a given story, but within the current movement of indie games, it is character design that is at the forefront of the development process. There is also increasingly room for plots that are not about winning but exploring.

Currently under development, Pikuniku breaks the traditional rules of gaming. It is a "therapeutic playground where the player will need to think creatively." There are no enemies to fight or kill, the avatar is not a hero, and, most importantly, cannot die. The character is a red, oval shape with just two eyes and thin, long, waggly legs, and its mission is to rebuild a community. The character's design is also key — it was the starting point for the game. One of the two creators, Rémi Forcadell, had animated a short clip of its movement, and when Arnaud De Bock saw the short GIF online, he contacted him and proposed working

SAMUEL BOUCHER_FACES

on a game together. Pikuniku has not only maintained the character's oddness but bases everything on it; it moves through the game seeming at first helpless, but learns to act socially through encountering other creatures that require its assistance.

In a similar tone, Ooblets is also about creating social coherence through farming little creatures, the Ooblets. Though it's much more refined and polished in its look than Pikuniku, Ooblets also began with design rather than concept. The promotion of Ooblets has also been outside of traditional norms, as creators Rebecca Cordingley and Ben Wasser have been actively promoting the game's characters and scenes online in order to build a fan base before the 2018 release.

The recently released GNOG is a puzzle game about exploring virtual toys, and has the option to play in VR via PlayStation VR. The player has to experiment with a new GNOG head in each level — by pushing and pulling different levers or rotating the head, for example — to uncover its secrets. Its lead designer, Samuel Boucher of Montreal-based KO_OP studio, has a passion for experimenting with facial designs, and it shows. In GNOG, the character's vibrant face is the environment, it's a facial machine to operate and to play with. Once again, there are no winners or losers as such, making the experience more akin to child's play than is traditional in gaming.

NEXT MONTH

GRADUATE SHOWCASE 2017
Revealed: CA's hand-picked highlights of the best talent from grad show season.

PART 9

This special 10-part series, in partnership with D&AD, is curated by this year's New Blood trustee Tom Manning. Each advice-packed article reveals the skills it takes to survive and thrive as a young designer in the modern industry, and this month, Tom shares inside insight into the D&AD New Blood judging process. *Catch up on any parts you missed by purchasing back issues, see page 74.*

FEATURED IMAGES:
Above: The Pencils up for grabs: Wood, Graphite, Yellow, White and the hotly contested Black; Right: The judges talk through the criteria for winning entries.

HOW TO MAKE JUDGES NOTICE YOUR WORK

In the penultimate part of our D&AD New Blood series, **Tom Manning** shares what the judges of design awards are really looking for

Several years ago, around this time, I was nervously waiting for the D&AD New Blood results to be released. I'd spent months working on my entries, knowing full well that there were thousands of talented students from around the world doing the same. Finally, I uploaded my work, fired off some celebratory GIFs on Twitter, then crossed my fingers and hoped for the best.

This year I came back to the New Blood awards, not as an entrant, but as a judge. It was an incredible honour, but also an amazing opportunity to look behind the curtain and see how the judging process works. It was also fascinating to see over one hundred responses to a brief. Even in my most highly caffeinated state, I'd struggle to come up with anywhere near that many different solutions to a problem. I came away from judging with so many things I wish I'd known when I was a student, so I asked some of the jury presidents to share what they saw, what they learned, and what could be improved.

1. TELL THE TRUTH
"I wish I'd seen more thinking," says Craig Oldham – president of the Monotype brief,
"and more personal and meaningful insight born out into design solutions." The idea is everything. This isn't exactly news, and when you've been working on a brief for so long, and are so deep into it, getting some perspective and making sure the idea is compelling and clear can be a tall order. But a good place to start is the truth.

What's the truest thing you can say? Get personal, and share your ideas with others – you're not looking for them to like it or dislike it, but to see whether your idea rings true with them. This is a foundation on which to build great work: avoid what Oldham refers to as "graphic styling", or faffing about with the stuff that doesn't matter.

2. DON'T PARROT THE BRIEF
One of the criteria for judging New Blood work is asking whether the entry is on brief. With any creative idea, making sure your solution answers the problem you've been tasked with is something to ask yourself through the entire process. But when you present your work, how do you show that it's succesfully met the brief?

"Not by playing back the brief first," says Simon Richings, jury president for the Hasbro brief. "Imagine that 20 times in a row. Get to the idea, ▶

Above: Judges watch case studies and debate the work; Right: Judges of the Hasbro brief become absorbed in playing one entrant's game.

SHOW THAT YOUR WORK IS ON BRIEF BY SMACKING THE JUDGES IN THE FACE WITH YOUR IDEA

▶ and do it, quickly." Vikki Ross, jury president on the British Army brief agrees: "When the brief was repeated back to us, it made it difficult for us to find a piece of work that really stood out from the rest," she says. Show that your work is on brief by smacking the judges (or clients) in the face with your idea, don't waste time telling people what they already know.

3. CONSIDER YOUR AUDIENCE
The easiest person to fool is yourself. But that also means that if you're not really persuaded by an idea, don't be so sure it's going to do much for your target audience. "Some entrants seemed to base a lot of their solutions on assumption, as opposed to fact or testing or insight, which is concerning," says Oldham.

When the brief is aimed at someone not like you – they could be older, or a different gender or social class – you have to work twice as hard to make it compelling. It can be easy to absolve yourself from making difficult decisions by thinking work is aimed at 'them, not me'. Search for what will interest the audience, rather than offering them something you think seems correct.

Asking yourself questions such as, 'Do people really care about this?' and, 'Is this honestly how people feel or behave?' will help keep you on track.

4. DON'T RELY ON DIGITAL
The real Mad Men of Madison Avenue only had TV, radio and posters to work with. But today we have a smorgasbord of ways to connect with people, much of which is online or on our mobiles. But technology alone can be cold. And for some entries, rather than supporting or extending the reach of the idea, the technology was the idea, which often didn't really work.

The best entries used technology to surprise and delight people – talking to them at the right moment, or giving them a sprinkle of 'magic'. The Hasbro brief asked students to design a party game for young adults to connect them offline, without using apps. "There were a number of entrants that sought to subvert the use of mobile, incorporating phones ironically or making a point about people not using them," says Oldman.

A digital idea doesn't have to live on a screen, so although you should think about technology, don't rely on it to carry your idea. Revealing the truth of how people behave online, but in the real world, can be just as powerful, if not more so.

5. THINK ABOUT THE JUDGES

I'm not saying us judges had it bad; D&AD looked after us and the New Blood team were still smiling at the end of the process, despite working weekends and long days. But if you imagine judging awards being leather sofas and ice buckets full of champagne, you're mistaken. We were in a small hot room, staring at a screen, looking at entry after entry. So here's a small, selfish, plea: make life as easy as possible for the people evaluating your work. Ultimately, you're telling a story. Ask yourself whether a three-slide introduction about why your story is strategically sound truly makes for a good story. I'd say nine times out of 10 the answer is no.

"Be concise", says Oldman. "Explain objectively: we have no idea about your solution or subject matter, so be objective about relaying that back to us, in a simple way." Another small but important thing to note is, what's your idea called? Having a memorable title helps judges mentally separate your work from the pile. Does anyone remember the one with the poster that also did that thing on Twitter? No? Me neither.

After a long day of debate, we eventually selected our Pencil winners, leaving us with just enough time to reflect on what we'd taken from judging. "It's an enriching and enlightening few days," says Oldman. "You get to see a wealth of work from all over the world, and see what all the young minds and next generation are thinking and creating. That's quite a privilege." Oldman adds that "critiquing work with other creative professionals, all of them having had a different journey, and all offering a different, compelling perspective is stimulating and inspiring."

What excited me most was knowing that the students behind this work are about to enter the industry. I can't wait to see studios and agencies flooded with talented people, who are all hungry to make challenging, thought-provoking work. ◻

HOW TO CRAFT A KILLER VIDEO

TOM MANNING SHARES HIS FIVE TOP TIPS FOR CREATING A CONCISE AND MEMORABLE VIDEO CASE STUDY

━━━

"That classic two-minute case study video reared its head again," says Craig Oldham, jury president for the Monotype brief. "I wish to implore students: focus on getting the work right, not putting the work in a video." It's true, the work is what matters. However, if you do decide to go for the video format, here is a simple checklist to ensure your film lets the work shine, and stands out from the rest.

1 GET TO THE POINT
If you have two minutes to tell the story, aim to land the idea in the first 20 seconds. Don't restate the brief or spend too much time explaining the problem. If you're struggling to do this then your idea may need simplifying.

2 WRITE AND REWRITE THE SCRIPT
There are probably lots of ways to explain your idea, so don't settle on the first draft of your script. Try a few different versions and then read them to friends to find out which is the clearest and most attention grabbing.

3 PAY A VOICEOVER ARTIST
Titles can be tiring for judges to read, and are a lot of added work for you to design and animate. Find a voiceover artist online and get them to record your script (it shouldn't cost more than around £10) to really emphasise your points and help get across the emotion of the idea.

4 GIVE THE WORK TIME
If you want the judges to read the work, then make sure it's legible. Work that flashes up and then disappears, or text that's too tiny to read, will just be ignored. Give your work the screen time it needs – again, test the video out on other people.

5 TELL A SHORT STORY
You don't have to use up the whole two minutes. Challenge yourself to cut 30 seconds from your case study. What would you lose and what would you keep? Chances are the short version will be clearer and do a better job of telling the story.

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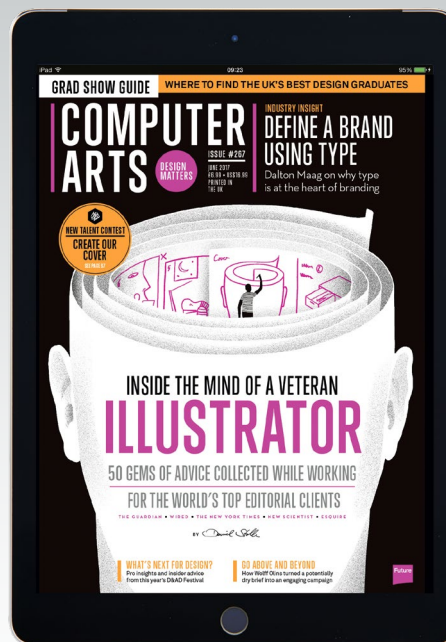
ISSUE 267 JUNE 2017

- Illustrator Daniel Stolle shares 50 gems of advice
- How type can shape a brand's personality
- Tips on nailing your final degree show
- What it takes to win a D&AD Award
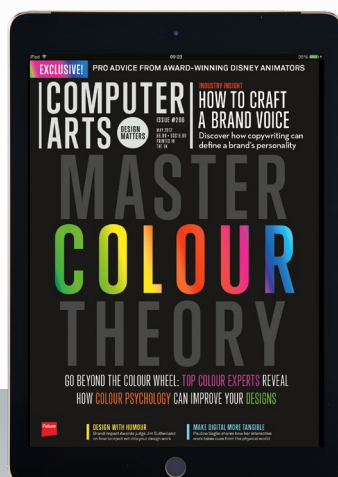
ISSUE 266 MAY 2017

Go beyond the colour wheel as we explore how colour psychology can improve your designs. Plus: how to become a better animator, design with wit and craft a brand voice.

ISSUE 265 SPRING 2017

Tailor your portfolio to get your ideal job, discover the four key rules of brand strategy, get inspired by tattoo design, and master the art of storyboarding.
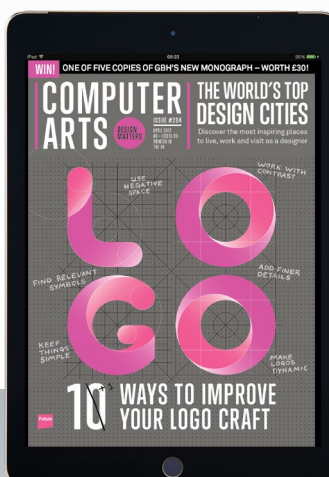
ISSUE 264 APRIL 2017

Improve your logo craft with our 11 steps to logo perfection, choose your next destination with our guide to the best creative cities, and learn how to get more from your mentor.

ISSUE 263 MARCH 2017

We reveal whether VR really is the future of design, discover how freelancers can get more from print, and discuss the growing trend for short, intensive design courses.

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PROJECTS

Computer Arts goes behind the scenes with world-leading designers as they reveal their working processes...

VIDEO INSIGHT

CREATE CLEAR, DEFENDABLE TERRITORY FOR A BRAND
The four co-founders of The Clearing reveal how they carve out clear territory for a brand to flourish, and why they believe strategy, design and writing all deserve equal weighting

THE STAMP OF EXCELLENCE
Studio Sutherl&, most awarded design agency at the D&AD Awards, discusses three projects – including its Yellow Pencil-winning Agatha Christie stamps
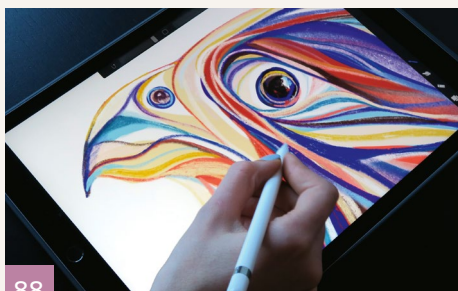
AWARD-WINNING ADVICE
World Illustration Awards category winner Claudine O'Sullivan shares tips for using an Apple Pencil and iPad Pro to create a hand-drawn look
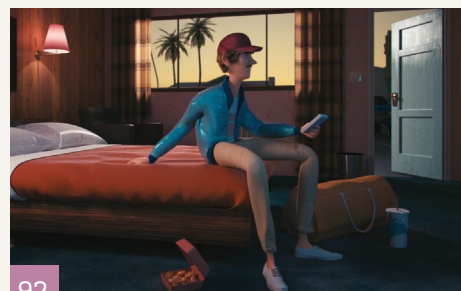
THE ART OF FILM
Art&Graft explores the making of its two atmospheric self-initiated shorts, Lost Hope and Early Bird Bookin', and shares highlights from three more of its films

■ **VIDEO INSIGHT**

CREATE CLEAR, DEFENDABLE TERRITORY FOR A BRAND

The Clearing's skill for finding a unique position for a client – and holding off all rivals to maintain it – is eloquently expressed by its emblem of a stag: "A beautiful beast, made for fighting…"

Following stints at various large agencies – including Wolff Olins, The Partners and most recently Interbrand, where all their paths first crossed – Richard Buchanan, Jonathan Hubbard, Andy Howell and Pete Dewar founded The Clearing in 2010.

"We didn't feel there were any agencies who worked in the way we wanted: a collegiate way of putting designers, writers, strategists and project people together to really solve problems," explains Buchanan. "It was about this very linear process, where a consultant would go and crack a problem, lob a hand grenade of a brief over the wall to the designer and writer, and they'd try and figure out what to do with that."

Representing strategy, design and writing between them, Buchanan, Hubbard, Howell and Dewar found a sweet spot: a flat agency structure that puts equal emphasis on all three disciplines, and have stuck to this principle.

'Clear, defendable territory' is the mantra for their seven-year-old agency, which combined with its name and logo conjures a powerful metaphor: a majestic stag, in a forest clearing, ready to repel all challengers.

We spent a day with the four co-founders to discover what all of this symbolism really means in practice, and how said territory can be claimed, and defended, effectively…

Why is the stag such an important symbol for The Clearing? What does it mean to you?
Jonathan Hubbard: 'Clear, defendable territory' has been our mantra since we set the business up – partly to try and find these spaces for our customers, but also for ourselves.

There are two reasons behind it. One was when we looked at our competitors, so many of them

were set up more like management consultants and serious businesses, and they didn't take the element of brand and design as close to themselves as they should have done.

But we also wanted a symbol that actually summed what we did. Clear defendable territory is the mantra with which we look at every piece of work we do. The stag is a beautiful beast made for fighting, and that's a nice metaphor. A brand should be a beautiful thing, which can defend its space. We wanted something of beauty to rally behind, which made us feel different.

What exactly is clear, defendable territory from a brand's perspective?
Richard Buchanan: We're interested in finding a clear space in a market. And when you talk about that clear space, think of somebody's mind. Brands are basically shorthand for what we recall in our head. When you say Nike, or Apple, it triggers something in your brain. We're trying to find that space in the market, inside your head, where that brand is associated with a set of values – a meaning that no one else can own.

In any given market, there are probably four positions. You've got the leader position, and then you've got a customer service brand which does what the leader originally did, packaged up in a more friendly, customer orientated way. Then as markets mature you get a no frills, budget proposition, and the fourth one is a challenger, which is very narrow in focus and just goes after a part of the market.

Is it easier to create that clear territory in one market position than another?
RB: They're like different personality types. If you're a leader, you can get away with a whiff of arrogance because you've got some

THE CLEARING
Since 2010, The Clearing has built a reputation for thinking differently, spurred by its mission to find "clear, defendable territory" for its clients. These include Ascot, Fitness First, Ocado, Eurostar, McLaren and Breast Cancer Now – which won a Brand Impact Award in 2016. www.theclearing.co.uk

proprietorial technology, or a really tangible USP that you have invested in.

If you're a customer champion, it becomes more emotive. You're friendlier, and warmer as a brand. Whereas if you're playing in that budget space, it's no frills. It's really direct.

There are certain behaviours and attributes that all of them have. Are any of them easier? Well, I guess brands in the budget space rarely come to a brand consultancy, so they'd probably do it themselves. But none of them are easier as such. They're all interesting in different ways.

Can you give us a good example of how you found clear defendable territory for a client?
Andy Howell: One good example is Fitness First. Most gyms talk about how you look; how to get ready for the beach. Our insight was more around the inner confidence that fitness unlocks. It put us into a very different space – not how fitness makes you look, but how it makes you feel.

That gave us our clear, defendable territory. It needed to look like a fitness leader, and behave more like an apparel brand than a gym.
Pete Dewar: We built Fitness First's tone of voice out of three values: it's personal, progressive and provocative. Imagine the voice of an inspirational coach. That guy who's in your corner. He's really active, energetic, positive and supportive, can cheer you up when you need it, and understands the right buttons to push. That's normally how we try and do it – we find that memorable shorthand.

Your Breast Cancer Now campaign [which won a Brand Impact Award in 2016] puts a fresh spin on charity fundraising – how did you find the clear territory there?
JH: Fitness First was a clear step from everyone else, but sometimes it's more subtle. Breast cancer charities tend to be very 'women power', as it's predominately women who are affected.

But actually, when we talked to them we found that men donate a lot of money to breast cancer charities, because they are often the ones left bereaved. We realised the brand had to include men, and that was a starting point for it to look a certain way. It had to feel more inclusive.

A lot of those 'cause' charities also feel top down: 'We are going to solve this.' Breast Cancer Now was about its supporter base. The people who spend hours and hours raising money for research. It was their charity. It didn't belong to a central organisation. Those are the sort of things we look for: it may not necessarily be a huge leap, but we look at all the elements that can influence the way a brand feels, looks and sounds, and ultimately try to make sure that we're not falling into the same traps as everyone else. □

Left: The Clearing found clear territory for Fitness First by focusing on how fitness makes you feel, rather than how you look.

Below: Designed to appeal to male donors as well as the traditional female demographic, this Breast Cancer Now campaign picked up the Social Impact trophy at last year's Brand Impact Awards.

TAP TO WATCH THE VIDEO NOW

CREATE A STANDOUT BRAND
In our first video, managing director Richard Buchanan reveals the four main market positions that a brand can take – and how to make an impact in each of them.
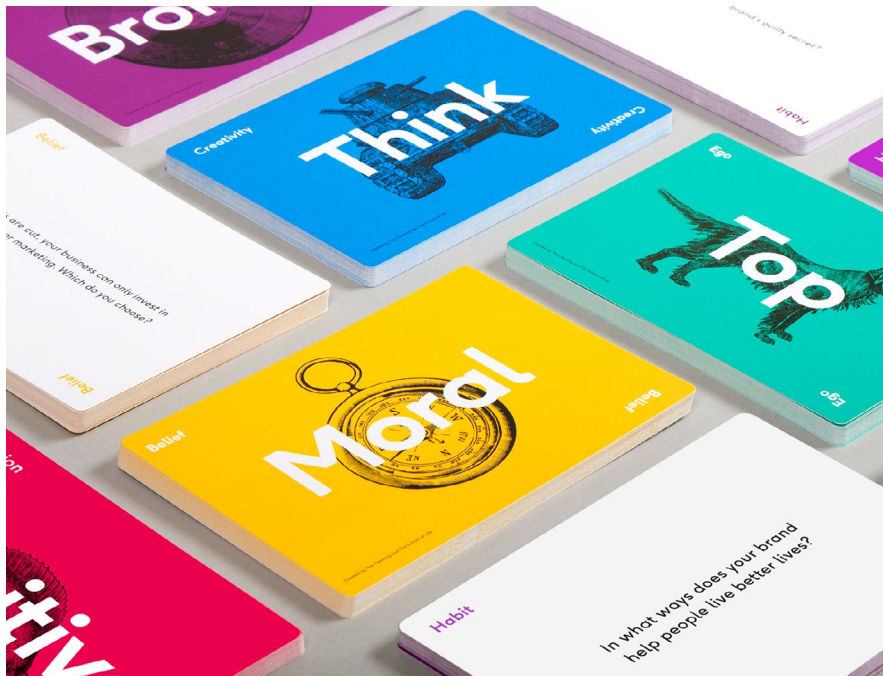
RICHARD BUCHANAN
Managing director
Richard studied product design, but also acquired marketing qualifications – which helped him land a job in advertising in 1992. After three years, he moved from adland to design at The Partners, where he first met Andy Howell.

Above and right: Created in partnership with The School of Life, Wild Cards is an ingenious self-initiated project that presents 100 probing questions in the form of game-like prompt cards in five categories: Creativity, Habit, Emotion, Ego and Belief. The Clearing launched the project with an event in which representatives from Google, Ocado and McLaren were asked a sample of questions from the box.

▶ TAP TO WATCH THE VIDEO NOW

JONATHAN HUBBARD AND ANDY HOWELL
Creative directors
Jonathan cut his teeth at Newell & Sorrell, which was taken over by Interbrand in 1997. After The Partners, Andy spent five years at Wolff Olins, before joining The Clearing's other three co-founders at Interbrand.

FIND CLEAR BRAND TERRITORY
In our second video, creative directors Jonathan Hubbard and Andy Howell (pictured) explore two examples of 'clear territory' in practice – and share their advice on how to defend it.

HOW TO DEFEND A BRAND'S TERRITORY

Jonathan Hubbard and Andy Howell reveal three ways to distance a brand from its competitors

1. Carve out a unique space
"It's about getting the quality of that initial piece of thinking right," insists creative director Jonathan Hubbard when asked how to make the 'clear territory' The Clearing strives to create for clients defendable. "That space should be based on truths, and built from the inside out. Competitors might want to claim the space, but it's completely owned by that brand – and they have a right to it – because it's what they've done all along. We're always trying to look for the thing that's different and special about an organisation, and make a virtue of that."

2. Make all the assets work hard
Most brand identities are composed of a relatively small number of assets, Hubbard points out. These could include colour, typeface, language, imagery, logo, and potentially some kind of branded device. "Make sure that each one of those is working hard for you," he urges. "You can't let one of them slip." Get all of the different elements punching their weight, and they'll be greater than the sum of their parts, making the brand easier to defend.
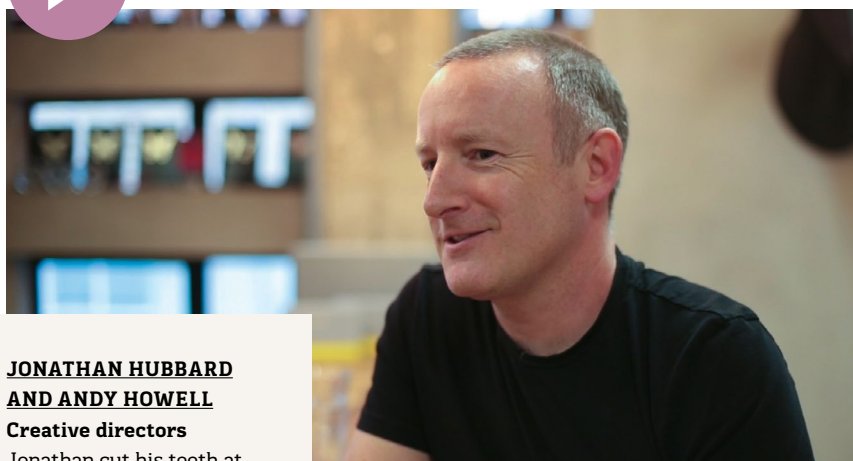
3. Never stop innovating
Although ownership of a coherent suite of assets will give a brand a strong footing from which to defend itself, it should never rest on its laurels. "The brand has got to be constantly innovating," adds Hubbard's fellow creative director Andy Howell.

"That's why we often stay with clients for a long, long time – we've done that initial brand programme, but we don't want that programme to finish because brands don't just stop, or keep doing the same thing forever. They need to keep innovating."

For Howell, it comes down to finding a distinctive brand signature that can be flexible enough to evolve without losing its core message. "They're the things that enable brands to keep ahead of the curve, and stay relevant in customers' minds," he continues. "That's a really important part of our job – not just brand creation, but brand development."

CHALLENGES WHEN NAMING A BRAND

Director of brand language Pete Dewar reveals three key challenges when naming a brand

1 Getting buy-in
According to Pete Dewar, getting everyone within the client organisation to believe in a new name is one of the biggest challenges. "It helps to be clear about the parameters, and what the name needs to do," he says. "You also need to determine who needs to be involved. Often a CEO who hasn't been part of the process comes in at the last minute and says 'no' when you've got alignment from everybody else." The lesson? Get them onboard at the start, keep them updated, and manage their expectations throughout the process.

2 Ensuring availability
The second challenge, which is only going to get tougher, is availability. "This could be trademarks, URLs, or social media handles," explains Dewar. "And if you're naming an international brand, you also need to ensure it doesn't mean something horrific in a different language." Trademark searches are also a good way to explore the market, and identify any opportunities for doing something different.

3 Nailing the creative
Compared to the above issues, Dewar argues the creative side is comparatively straightforward. "We tend to avoid abstract, meaningless names. They require massive investment to build meaning into them," he points out. "Most companies we work with don't want that level of investment upfront. They want a name to be immediate, and we want a name to have a story, so when you hear it, it takes you somewhere instantly. Of course, real-world names are harder to get in terms of trademarks and URLs. It takes a lot of management to get them through."

Above and left: In another example of clear, defendable territory, The Clearing gave Ocado's online pet store the cheeky, evocative name 'Fetch', and built a brand proposition around the concept of 'the perfect pet parents'. "We gave a voice to the animals," explains MD Richard Buchanan, "and acknowledged the emotional bond we have with our pets."

TAP TO WATCH THE VIDEO NOW
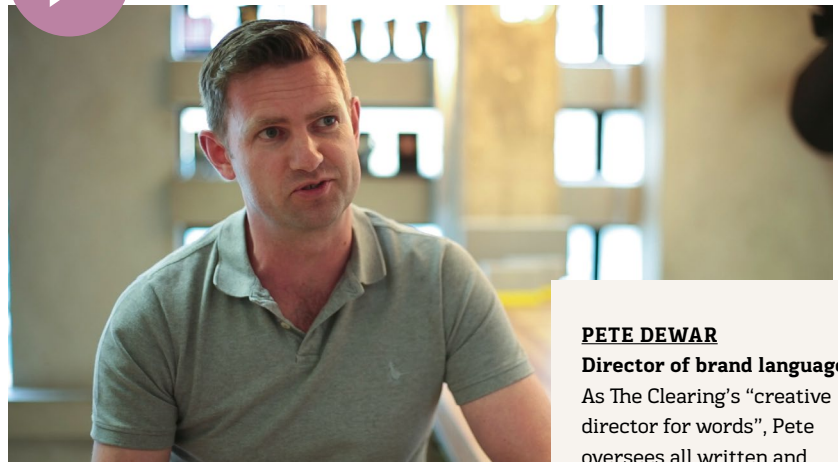
WHY WORDS AND DESIGN ARE EQUAL
In our third video, director of brand language Pete Dewar explains why he puts writing on an equal footing with design and strategy – and shares his advice for crafting a brand voice.

PETE DEWAR
Director of brand language
As The Clearing's "creative director for words", Pete oversees all written and verbal communication. Having studied modern languages, he started his career in advertising as a planner, before moving to branding as head of verbal identity at Interbrand.

Watch the videos on our YouTube channel: **www.bit.ly/ca268-theclearing**

THE STAMP OF EXCELLENCE

Studio Sutherl& discusses three projects that helped it become the most awarded studio at the D&AD Awards, including its Yellow Pencil-winning Agatha Christie stamps

PROJECT FACTFILE

BRIEF: 2017 is the 40th anniversary of the death of Agatha Christie, and it is 100 years since she wrote her first crime novel, The Mysterious Affair at Styles, featuring Hercule Poirot. The Royal Mail commissioned six stamps to celebrate the author, and the characters, clues and mysteries she created.
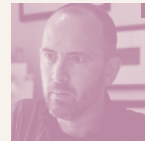**STUDIO:** Studio Sutherl&, www.studio-sutherland.co.uk
ILLUSTRATOR: Neil Webb, www.neilwebb.net
CLIENT: Royal Mail, www.royalmail.com
PROJECT DURATION: 22 months
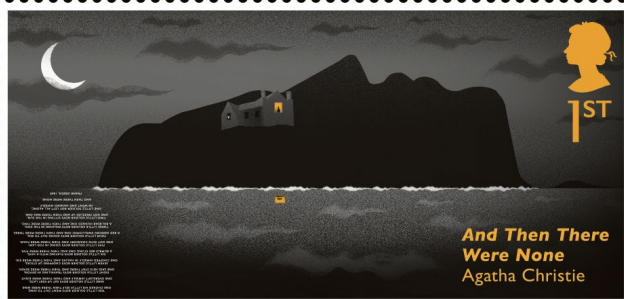**LIVE DATE:** September 2016 (won D&AD Yellow Pencil April 2017)

JIM SUTHERLAND
Founder, Studio Sutherl&
Jim Sutherland co-founded award-winning studio Hat-trick Design in 2001, and left to set up Studio Sutherl& in 2014. Jim has won over 150 professional awards, and his clients include Natural History Museum, Welsh National Opera and Prostate Cancer UK. He is also co-chair of judges at CA's Brand Impact Awards 2017.

A Murder is Announced
Agatha Christie
£1.52
03

And Then There Were None
Agatha Christie
1ST
04

The Murder of Roger Ackroyd
Agatha Christie
£1.33
05

The Body in the Library
Agatha Christie
£1.52
06

01 In homage to Agatha Christie's first crime novel, Hastings and Poirot, a lamp and a pleated tablecloth form the clever optical skull effect.

02 Thermo-reactive ink reveals a silhouetted killer on the Orient Express.

03 The stamp for A Murder Is Announced also uses heat-sensitive ink. The torch beam becomes a clock face – a vital clue.

04 The island forms the killer's profile for this stamp, and the poem central to the plot appears as micro type.

05 Look closely and you'll see Poirot in the flames, and the victim's suicide note is legible with a magnifying glass.

06 Miss Marple's profile appears on this stamp thanks to the magenta bookmark ribbon.

07 The sketch planning the stamp for A Murder is Announced.
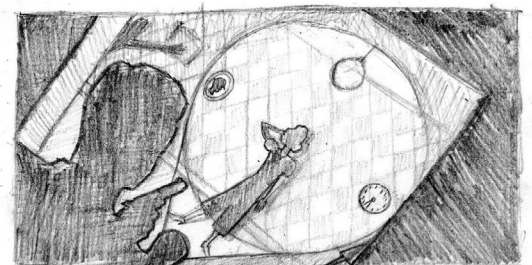
SILHOUTTED FIGURE WHERE THE GUN COULD BE HELD BY SOMEONE ELSE OVER HIS SHOULDER
07

APPROACHING THE PROJECT
Jim Sutherland

I was first asked to pitch for this commemorative set of stamps back in December 2014. The brief was to celebrate Agatha Christie's work, characters and stories in an interesting and engaging way across six stamps. The stamps include mysteries featuring Christie's main creations – Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple.

I love detective fiction. Using clues to solve mysteries has a lovely parallel with graphic design, so it's fair to say I was very excited about the project. Her books are so simply written with lovely plot twists and the stories are almost magical - full of false clues and suspects.

I was keen early on to use visual clues and illusions such as hidden imagery or words – things that you need to see and solve or discover. For instance, the stamp representing Murder on the Orient Express has Hercule Poirot's profile hidden in the steam, and a red kimono represents red herrings. We used heat-sensitive ink, so if you touch the stamp the curtain in the second window fades to reveal the killer. The suspects are all printed in micro text along the train tracks. I loved the idea that you need magnifying glass to read some of the clues – as stamp collectors as well as sleuths use them.

What I really wanted to do was find a way of capturing the era of the Golden Age of detective fiction without it falling into pastiche. I found ▶

NEIL WEBB
Freelance illustrator
Based in Brighton, Neil's aim as an illustrator is to provide a strong and immediate visual solution. His work has a conceptual edge to it and, usually, a twist. He's inspired by early 20th century design, lithography and screen printing. Clients include the BBC, Publicis, M&C Saatchi, The Economist and Conran Design and Sony.

The Murder of Roger Ackroyd
Agatha Christie

08

Neil Webb's work and thought it was superb. It's modern, beautifully crafted and ultimately has a very clever approach to visual storytelling.

ILLUSTRATING THE STAMPS
Neil Webb

The black-and-white palette was Jim's idea, and I think it immediately gives you the context of film noir and the visuals of that age. This helps the viewer locate the time and place of the stamps. The graphic style at the time was pared down and stylised, and the printing methods had to be economical, which I think makes them all the more graphically powerful. I tried to replicate that style with the compositions of the stamps and to get some of the quality of the textures of period print.

After the initial pencil sketches, I went straight into Photoshop. It's always been my main tool and I'm comfortable 'drawing' in it. The ideas themselves came from the collaboration between Jim and I. We both sketched and I then refined the compositions. Where a brief allows, I try to find a visual twist that reinforces the narrative in an unexpected 'double take' sort of way. This could be through objects and people interacting to create a new form or to set a scene. I think this gives an image depth so that it is more than just a depiction,

08–09 Neil Webb's sketch for The Murder of Roger Ackroyd (above) developed from Jim Sutherland's initial plan for the stamp (right).

10–11 Touch this stamp for a Murder is Announced with your thumb and a vital clue about the time of the murder appears.

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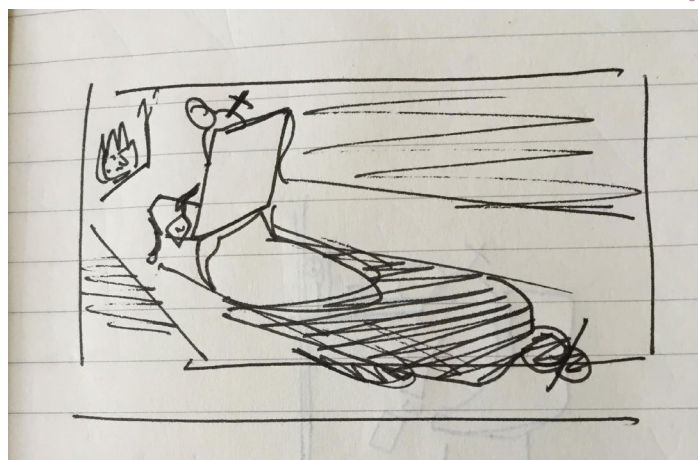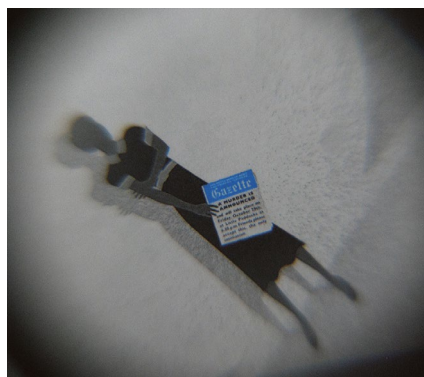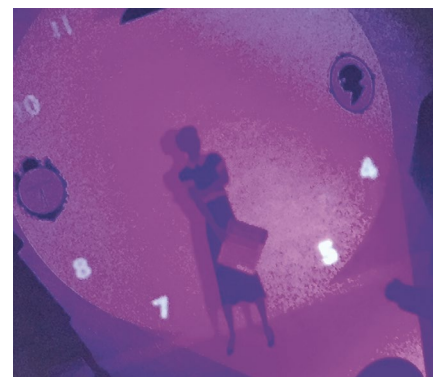
AN OPEN BOOK

Neil Webb shares two ideas that didn't quite get the stamp of approval
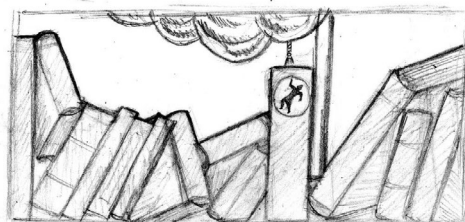
The first concept for The Body in the Library wasn't developed, as the body was too small on the spine of the central book.

This second concept was developed, but the pile of books forming Miss Marple's face was replaced with a silk ribbon bookmark forming her profile.

FULL CIRCLE

Working with NB Studio and Dalton Maag, Studio Sutherl& won a D&AD Wood Pencil with this beautifully simple yet effective identity design for TypoCircle

Typographic Circle is a group formed back in 1976 bringing together people with an interest in typography. It's a not-for-profit organisation and stages a variety of typography events, including monthly lectures on 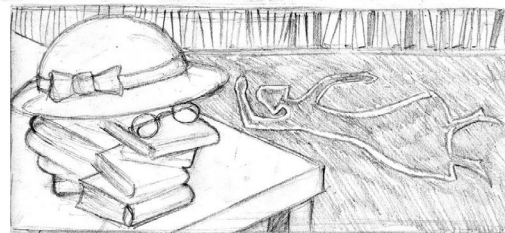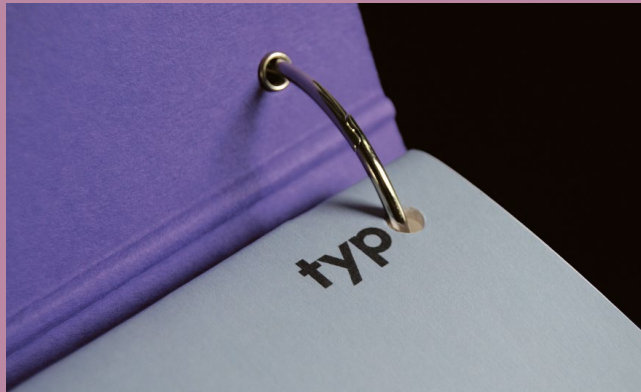the topic. The original brief was to produce a book and exhibition designs for TypoCircle's 40th anniversary last year, but this ended up morphing into designing the organisation's identity.

NB Studio asked me to work on the project with them. We collectively talked about the project a lot and then came up with initial ideas to present to NB and the Typographic Circle committee. We then worked closely with Sallyanne Theodosiou and Lynda Relph-Knight on the writing. Once we'd come up with an idea for the identity, we asked Dalton Maag to craft the logotype itself.

It is a ridiculously simple idea – the 'o' of typo becomes a circle. It's mnemonic and it just seems right and proper. We used an original cut of Futura as the basic typeface because it's beautiful and handily geometric in that its 'o' is a full circle. That 'o' then becomes a hole, a binding ring, a pencil end, a badge, a blackboard, and so on, throughout all of the items we designed.

The lowercase 'o' becomes an all-purpose hole innovatively deployed across the items designed for Typographic Circle.

ANIMAL ANTICS

Collaborating with Mr Smith's Letterpress Workshop, Studio Sutherl& printed a onomatopoeically-inspired children's book, and won another D&AD Wood Pencil

The inspiration for the project Eeormoo? goes back to a poster I did for a conference called Cowbird at Norwich University of the Arts. It had a cow saying 'tweet' and a bird saying 'moo'. This made me smile, and I started thinking that animals making the wrong noises would be funny.

Taking the idea of onomatopoeic words, set in big, beautiful, woodblock type, I wrote some short stories to explain why the animals were making those noises. An owl who's scared of the dark, a sheep who's tired of being told what to do – those kinds of scenarios. Kelvyn Laurence Smith and I then worked on the layouts, and Rebecca Sutherland did some wonderful illustrations, which we made into woodblocks for printing. The technique is lovely and tactile, you're restricted to what's available in the workshop for the printing – for instance in type sizes and styles – but this leads to more interesting work, I think.

We created a 24-page book at 235x300mm and printed a limited run of 1,000 copies. We've also printed limited editions of some of the pages as posters, which are 550x360mm and available framed or unframed at www.sutherlandsmith.xyz. Collaborating as Sutherl&Smith, our studio and the printer plan to create further letterpress projects in the future.
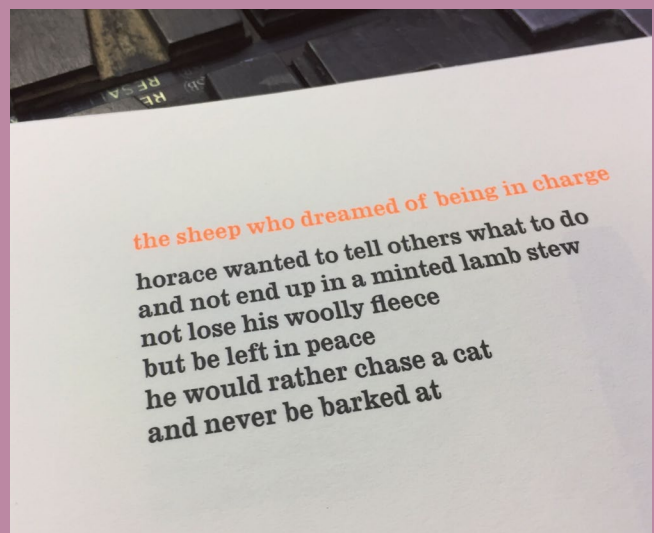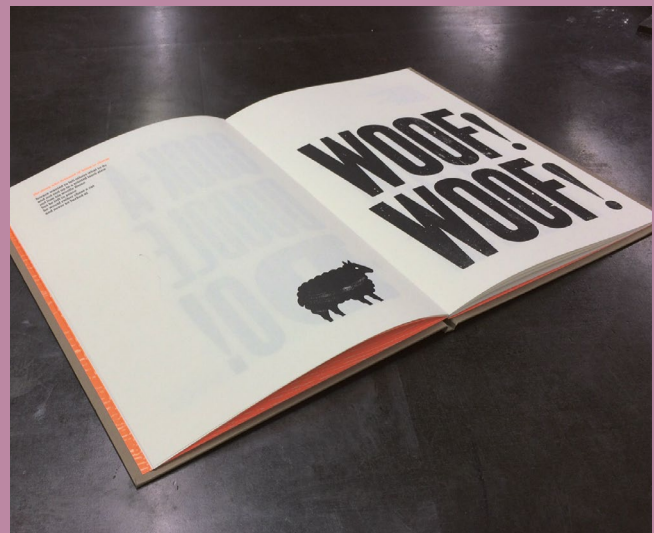
A whole menagerie based on animal sounds, basic silhouette forms and letterpress characters was developed for this project.

12 The pack pamphlet includes books and objects from Christie's travels and her work as a chemist.

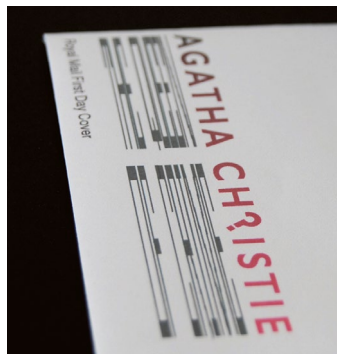**13** A cryptic clue is hidden in the extended type on the Royal Mail First Day Cover.

14 The design of the pack is based on the idea of bookshelves that run as a timeline of the author's amazing life.

15 The full First Day Cover in all its glory, with the six stamps postmarked.

16 One of Jim Sutherland's proudest moments was when he first saw the sheets of finished stamps.

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"Royal Mail was really interested in pushing the ideas as much as possible"

▶ and becomes a bit lyrical. First, I try to pare an image down to the essential elements and then see how these elements can fit together to make something new. This is the hardest and most rewarding part of the process for me, and it's sometimes just a case of hours of sweating over it, and sketching until the magic happens.

The process was a pretty smooth one in general, and most of the time it was just a case of refining the details. One image we did revisit and change quite a lot, was the one for The Body in the Library, which initially had Miss Marple's face formed by a pile of books. Now her profile is formed by a magenta bookmark ribbon. There were other little touches too, like replicating the wave patterns as clouds for And Then There Were None, creating a nice little surprise.

CONCLUSION
Jim Sutherland

One of the biggest challenges was trying to capture a plot in one tiny frame, not giving the plotlines away, but having clues and points to discover on closer inspection. The micro text was tricky to scale. It's 0.25pt type. Trying to see this is pretty much impossible and asking Royal Mail to proof it was also difficult.

Apart from that, it was just joyful putting in lots of hidden clues – and not holding back. Royal Mail was really interested in pushing the ideas as much as possible and was very keen on utilising print techniques such as the thermochromatic inks, spot UV and micro text. There were no disasters, but there was lots of trial and error, and a ludicrous amount of detail and craft.

When the stamps came back, I got even more excited about the project. Seeing them as repeated sheets was amazing. As soon as you tear one off and stick it on an envelope, it becomes a physical thing. When the project won the Yellow Pencil, I was absolutely delighted for us, for Neil and for Royal Mail. The project really was a joy from start to finish, and I think that's reflected in the result. ◻

■ **WORKSHOP**

USE DIGITAL TOOLS FOR A HAND-DRAWN LOOK

A category winner at the World Illustration Awards, **Claudine O'Sullivan** shares her advice for sketching using an Apple Pencil and iPad Pro

CLAUDINE O'SULLIVAN
Irish artist Claudine O'Sullivan is known for her distinctive hand-drawn illustrations. Her work for the worldwide Apple Pencil campaign was a category winner at this year's World Illustration Awards – other clients include MTV, WeTransfer and Derwent Pencils.
www.claudineosullivan.com

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1 O'Sullivan sketches animals on paper during one of her Wild Life classes.

02 This day trip to Kent was organised by Wild Life and Sky Birds of Prey.

03 Initial sketches from O'Sullivan's day out in Kent.

▌TRANSITIONING TO DIGITAL

Ever since childhood, I've been a pencil and paper girl. In my teens, I started using colouring pencils, and my love for them was instant. I've been working as an illustrator since 2013, primarily working in my beloved coloured pencil. I then scan in my work and tidy up using very basic Photoshop skills. As I've gained more commercial work, editing and working digitally makes a lot of sense. Last year, I first started working on a tablet – the iPad Pro. Despite having worked in traditional pencil for over a decade, using Apple Pencil and the Procreate app came surprising naturally to me. I work in the same way I work on paper, using a very basic approach – an initial sketch outline Layer, which I then build up in colour. I stick to a maximum of three Layers, but often just work on one.

My initial iPad illustrations – a bear and an owl – are still being used on the Apple Pencil campaign. I've also created a fully digital piece for the Tasmania-based app developers of Procreate, Savage Interactive. There are no surprises they were after a Tasmanian devil. I still use colouring pencils, and often combine traditional and digital drawing into one piece.

SEEK INSPIRATION

A lot of my work is nature based – I'm a huge animal lover. Living in London, I find that getting up close and personal with nature can be a struggle, so travel is a huge priority for me! I also attend Wild Life drawing classes (www.wildlifedrawing.co.uk) every few weeks. They're much like normal life drawing classes, but with animals, and are an amazing opportunity to create quick observational sketches and take lots of reference photos. The piece I've created for this tutorial stems from a mix of reference photos and sketches of a tiercel peregrine falcon. These are from a drawing day trip out to Kent, which was organised by Wild Life Drawing and Sky Birds of Prey.

SETTING UP YOUR CANVAS

Perhaps the most appealing thing about working digitally is the ability to zoom. Depending on what the illustration is being used for, take some time to chose a canvas size. If you want this to be a printable image, make sure the resolution is high enough. I usually work at ▶
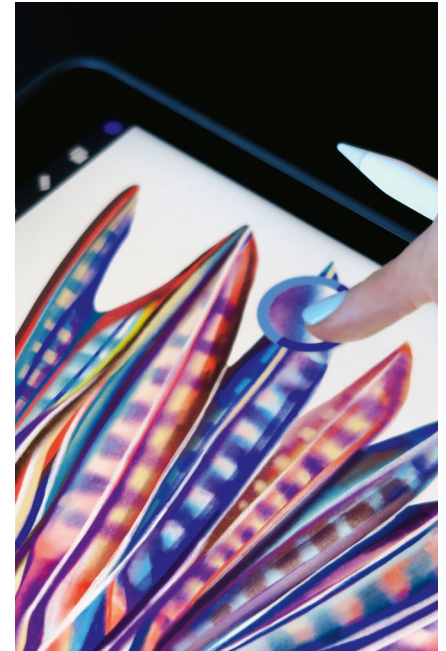
04 O'Sullivan combines a number of different sketches and photos into one sketch.
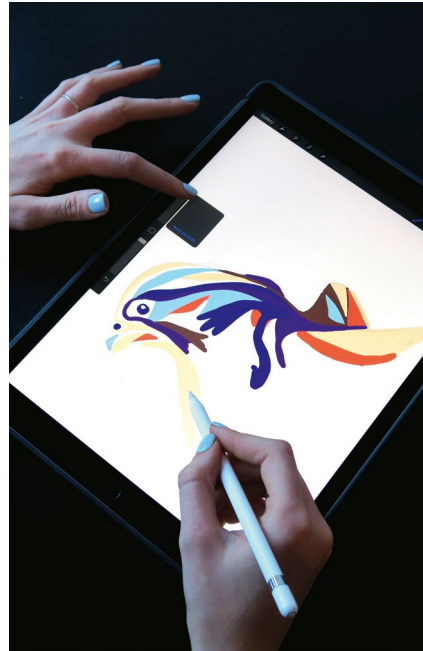
05 Playing with colour is an important part of O'Sullivan's work.

06 Double tap your illustration to change colour while you work.

07-08 After creating a base Layer, O'Sullivan then uses her customised Pencil to add detail.

05

06

6144x8196 pixels, which is huge! This means I'm limited to six Layers, but enables me to zoom in on tiny details, and potentially print to billboard size. I'd also recommend going to Settings>Preferences>Advanced Gesture Controls to ensure that Apple Pencil is the selected tool, and that Touch is set to Gestures Only. This helps avoid accidental finger painting!

FIND YOUR BRUSH

If you too are making the transition from paper to digital, it's important not to rush into your first piece. Take some time to play around and customise the different Brush settings. Depending on your style, and which mediums you use on paper, different Brushes will suit you. Each Brush type is fully adaptable, so spend time tweaking until you achieve a setting you're comfortable with, and don't forget to save! I mostly stick to one customised Pencil setting, which perfectly mimics the colouring pencils I use. You can also customise a fine tip to create a very slight bleed (mimicking ink on paper) or create a Brush to realistically mimic the running of watercolour or ink on paper.

CREATE A ROUGH SKETCH

My first step in creating a piece is a quick, observational sketch. Often I'll sketch this first rough, directly onto the iPad. Other times, I'll scan my sketchbook in and use that as a base Layer. For this example, I've sketched a

simplified version of my paper sketch directly onto the iPad. I find it useful at this stage to reduce the Layer Opacity, so that my sketch is only faintly visible. I also have a number of photo references to hand. The beauty and challenge of drawing wildlife is that your subject is never quite still, so I combine a number of sketches and different photos, to hopefully capture the movement and essence of my subject.

PLAY WITH COLOUR

The most distinctive aspect of my illustration work is colour – this is where I like to play around. Before starting, I take time to look at areas of light and shade, and pick out certain tones I want to exaggerate within the piece. I suggest choosing an initial colour palette of about five main colours that work well together. I try to get these down as quickly as possible on a new layer of flat colours, under my baseline sketch Layer, using a large HB Pencil (under Sketching) or Studio Pen (under Inking). My goal is to create a sense of form, focusing on light and shade and expressing this through different colours. You can then choose different shades or tones and introduce more colours using the colour wheel. As you work, switch between colours by double tapping the illustration.

ADD DETAIL

Once I have the base colour Layer, I'll switch to my customised Pencil, and use this for the rest
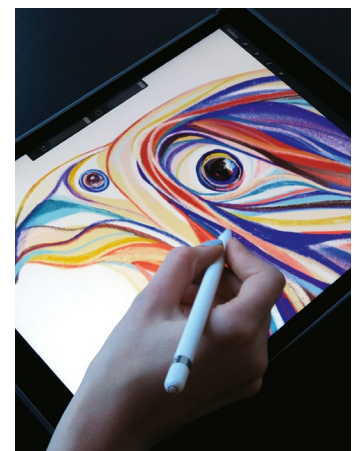
07
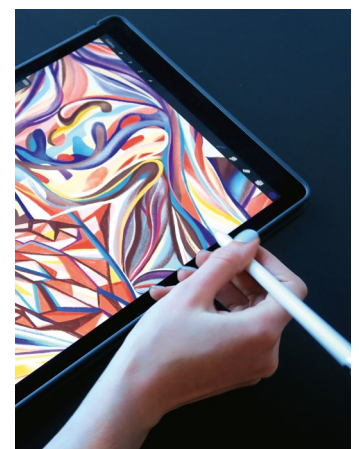
08

09 Abstract patterns and colours are another staple of O'Sullivan's work.

10 O'Sullivan advises not overusing the Undo button while drawing.

09

VISIT THE WIA EXHIBITION

SEE O'SULLIVAN'S WORK ALONG WITH OTHER WINNING ENTRIES

There were over 2,300 entries from 64 countries for this year's World Illustration Awards (presented by the Association of Illustrators, in partnership with Directory of Illustration). Ahead of the awards ceremony in August, all 50 shortlisted projects across eight award categories – including advertising, books, design and editorial – will be on display at the Embankment Galleries of London's Somerset House from 31 July to 29 August. The exhibition will also be touring the UK later in the year. Admission is free.

of the piece. The only changes I make are in the Opacity and Size, using the slider controls. Once again I create a new top Layer and pick out key details from my sketch Layer. Once these are in place, I can turn off my sketch Layer. Then I usually flatten the whole piece to one Layer so I can treat the drawing as if it's pencil on paper – but that's up to you, you may prefer to blend your Layers at the end. I then pick a point of most detail, such as an eye or beak, and work my way out from there, adding detail and introducing different shades and tones from my base colours. I find birds fascinating to draw as their anatomy is so interesting and I find it useful to break them down into key shapes and patterns, which I then create in an abstract way using different line patterns and colours.

RESIST THE UNDO BUTTON

Being able to zoom and edit are huge benefits of working digitally, however I always recommend resisting perfection! Working in colouring pencil means it's very difficult to rub out marks and start again, so I've learnt to accept all the little mistakes – my illustrations are never perfect, and I don't strive for perfection. For me, the main appeal of the iPad is being able to create art in the same way I do on paper. So I continue to resist perfection and leave in the accidents. I believe these can make an illustration come alive, both on paper and tablet. ◻

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01

THE ART OF FILM: TWO SHORT MOVIES

Art&Graft explains the making of its two atmospheric self-initiated shorts, Lost Hope and Early Bird Bookin'

02

PROJECT FACTFILE

BRIEF: Lost Hope and Early Bird Bookin' are part of Art&Graft's Studio Films series. They're both self-initiated animation projects, with no set brief and no restrictions on creative approach.
**CLIENT:** Self-initiated
THE STUDIO: Art&Graft, www.artandgraft.com
LIVE DATE: Out now. Watch all the Studio Films at:
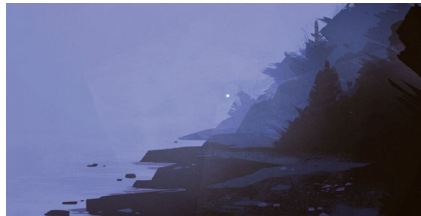www.artandgraft.com/work/studio-films

MIKE MOLONEY
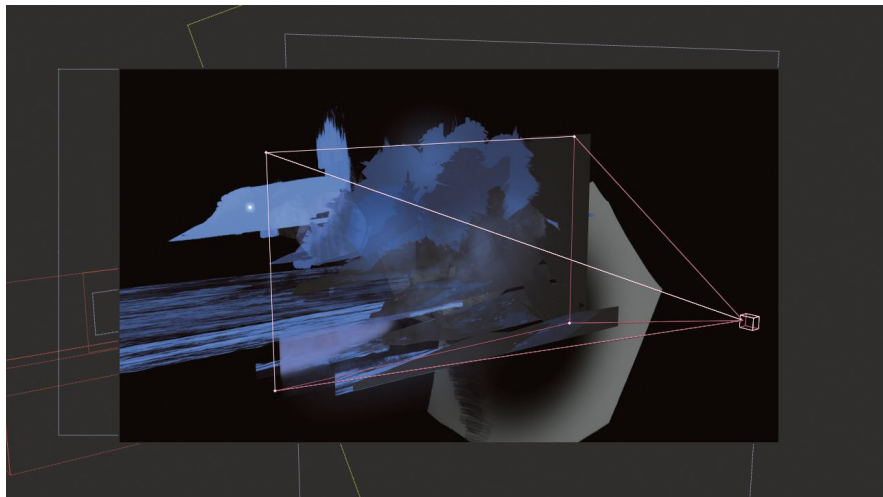**Founder and creative director, Art&Graft**
Having worked in in design and animation since graduating from Camberwell College of Arts in 1999, Mike began his career at digital agency Deepend. He then set up his own production studio, and later founded the motion house Art&Graft in 2010.
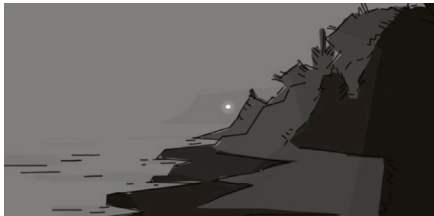
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01-02 Early Bird Bookin' (top) and Lost Hope are all about generating atmosphere.

03-05 The sense of depth in Lost Hope was created by building up 2D coloured layers in 3D space.

06 A frame from the Lost Hope storyboard, which tracks the movement of the light beam – a motif in the film.

WHY WE MAKE FILMS
Mike Moloney

We'd been working on both Lost Hope and Early Bird Bookin' for a while, and at the same time were finishing up the new Art&Graft site, so thought it'd be a good idea to launch everything at the same time. The new site offers a clean and accessible platform that focuses more on the visual aspect of our previous and most current work. It includes a Workshop section, where visitors get a peek behind the studio door and can look at some of the R&D design work that is constantly going on here.

Both Lost Hope & Early Bird Bookin' are part of our ongoing Art&Graft Studio Film series. The series has been part of our company ethos since day one; the aim is to provide time and space for our team to develop their individual creative interests as well as progress their craft. The series also gives us the chance to work outside the constraints of commercial projects.

We've produced five films in the series so far, drawing from a wide range of influences, and they've been recognised by Short of the Week and Staff Pick on Vimeo. As well as igniting our own creative fires, they've also led to commercial commissions from clients.

LOST HOPE
The John Carpenter influence behind Lost Hope started purely as a musical thing. Lost Hope was originally going to be a music video for Laura Marling (we also did an earlier music video for her for Short Movie). It wasn't used, but as we had finished the film it seemed a shame to just hide it away, so we reworked it and cracked a track from John's Lost Themes album onto it. It worked really well and gave the whole film a dark atmosphere and moody vibe.

The guys at Echoic Audio did an insanely good job of producing the track that's on

07
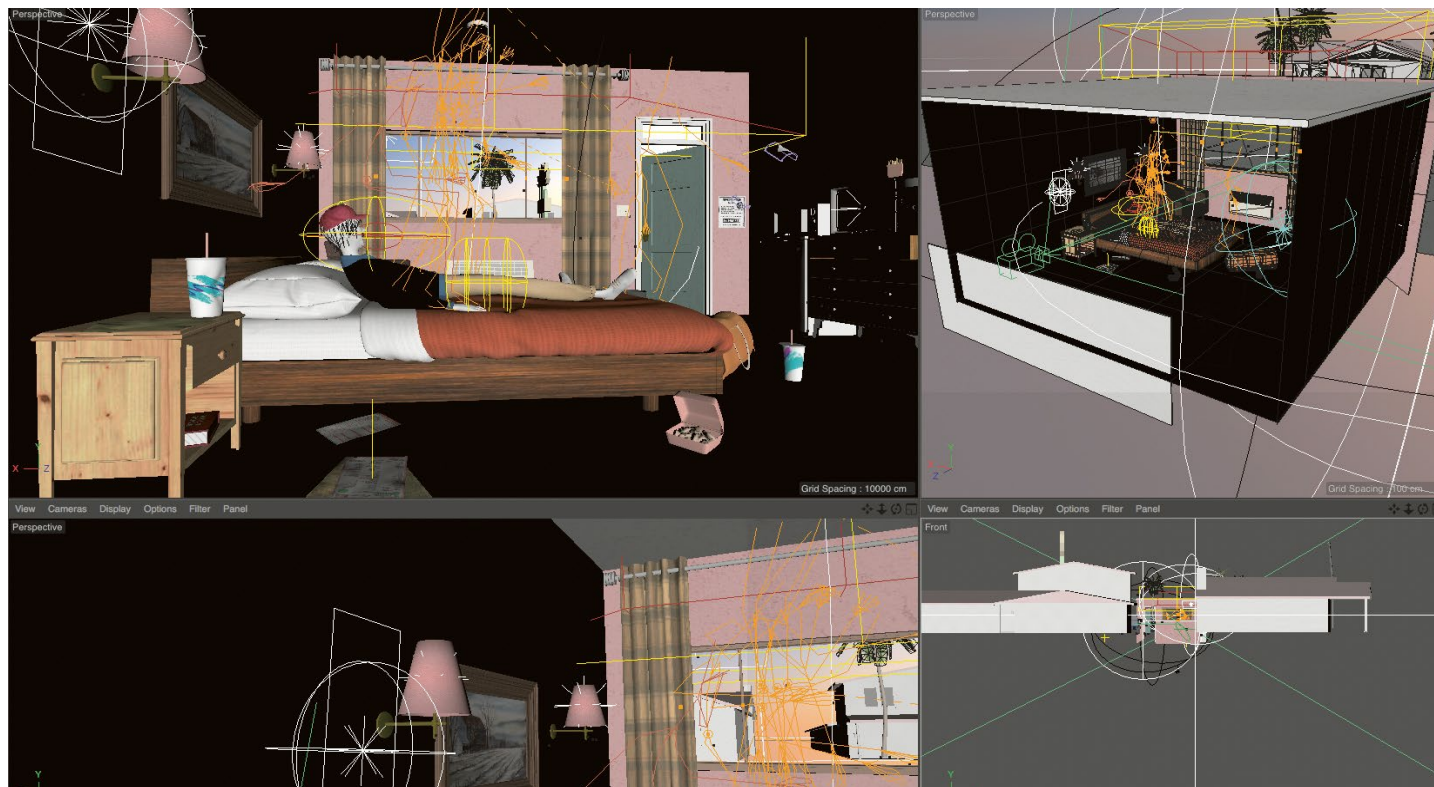
MAKING THE CUT

Mike Moloney on paring down the details in Lost Hope

With our more illustrative work, we always get excited about trying to capture the essence of cinematic, more realistic lighting and atmosphere in a stylised way. In Lost Hope, it was about simplifying the shapes of buildings, trees and hills into interesting silhouettes. At the same time we condensed the colour palette down to various tones of blue and purple to emulate a fog-filled scene, with darker elements closer to camera and lighter ones receding into the distance.

the final film, and the visual style is based on distilling moody photographic references into bold, graphic illustrations with a limited colour palette. We've been in love with the still photography of Patrick Joust for a while, and his work was a big influence. He takes night-time photography to the next level, capturing beautiful colours and mysterious compositions.

Every shot was created as a styleframe in Photoshop and then brought to life with a combination of Cinema 4D and After Effects. The comping in the latter added plenty of extra depth to the original styleframes, with animated fog and light bleeds. A lot of the mood of the film comes from the pace of the editing too. We let the camera hold a little too long on the shots and had the subtlest amount of action in each frame, until the streaks begin to burst into the shots and the pace builds up.

EARLY BIRD BOOKIN'
This animation depicts a roadside motel scene, fitting perfectly with Mac DeMarco's music, and its laid-back and unusual mood. William Eggleston's '60s and '70s photography of American settings was also an influence. He captures light and form to generate great atmosphere, even in mundane places such as car parks and hotel rooms.

We wanted to create a film that was very simple and short, and apply a subtle deadpan humour. Seeing this guy so bored and relaxed, although he's basically about to be kicked out, gives him this lovable slacker personality that

07 A scene from Early Bird Bookin' plotted out from various angles in Cinema 4D.

08 A test render of the props the film's protagonist slacker had in his room.

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made us laugh. The visual style was the result of a mix of influences. It's basically an attempt to combine stylised 3D characters with a cinematic lighting set, influenced by a variety of the photographers and films we love.

On the technical side, this project was first approached as a little experiment to use motion capture clips with stylised 3D characters that we'd designed. It was also a good excuse to explore more realistic character set renders as there are now lots of amazing render engines available in Cinema 4D, while trying to maintain the strong art direction we're used to. We also used the project to test the possibilities of Mixamo rigs and see how usable these would be for future projects. □

09 The title typeface was chosen to match the tone of the short film, which was inspired by '50s and '60s America.

10–11 One of the purposes of doing the film project was to test the use of motion capture data to animate the character.
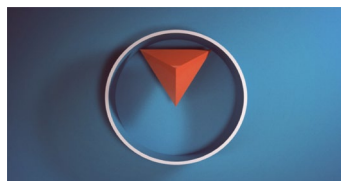

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LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION

Mike Moloney explains the concept behind three more films from the studio's film series

GIZMOSIS
First, we gathered audio samples from tiny machines and mechanical objects, and edited them into a sort of conversation. Then we created the animated gizmos that would actually have the conversation.

THE WALK
This film was inspired by my visit to the Lake District, and is based on walking tours I took. It is about the emotional impact a walk in nature can have, and shows the epic beauty and vastness of nature.
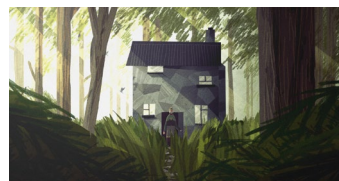
CANYON ROAD
Celebrating '70s and '80s gangster films, Canyon Road draws inspiration from Julius Shulman, whose photos embody that era's LA scene. We wanted to tell a complex story in one slow camera move.

Reed **design** **writing** **Words.**

Reed Words *is a brand writing agency based in London, working across the globe with clients such as Skype, Disney, and London's National Theatre, as well as creative partners such as Mucho, FITCH and SomeOne. The work covers brand strategy, voice, campaigns, UX – you name it. Or get them to name it – Reed Words does that too.*

WRITING FOR ONLINE

Writing for the internet is about capturing your readers' attention and using straightforward, clear language, argues **Reed Words**

Behold the online age: where the old rules are toppled and no area of human activity is left untransformed – be it travelling, shopping, cat watching or copywriting. Yes, copywriting.

'Writing for the web' is sometimes talked about as if it were a unique discipline; a dark art. It's full of arcane terms like 'link building' and 'white hats' and is governed by rules like: "Everyone has a short attention span these days, so whatever you're going to say, spit it out."

We think the principles of good writing stay the same, whatever the medium. What's different about the web is how much more a copywriter has to worry about.

When you're writing copy to go on, say, a beer mat, the relationship between your words and your reader is pretty straightforward. They want somewhere to put their drink, you want them to remember your brand. So you focus on making your copy smart, bright and fun.

Writing for the web is different because when your readers are online, there are a hundred other things vying for their attention.

The likes of Buzzfeed found a way to solve this problem long ago. Their writers are masters of grabbing readers – using headlines such as 'Can You Ace This Incredibly Basic Geography
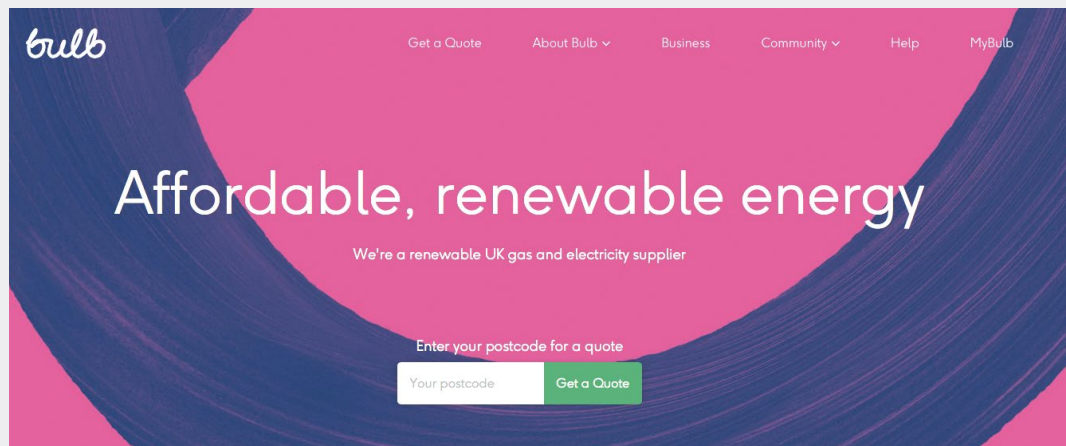

Reed Words focuses on simple language with copy for the websites of Bulb (above) and BetterMed (right).

Quiz?' and '18 Ways You're Cooking Chinese Food Wrong'.

These tricks are now pretty ubiquitous, and that's because they work. But if getting your readers' attention is one worry, keeping it is an even bigger one, especially if you're asking them to do something less fun than reading Buzzfeed.

For instance, take our work with BetterMed – a start-up transforming healthcare finance in the US. When people use BetterMed, they're making a really important decision about their health (and finances). And that's why we wrote our application form in everyday, easy-to-follow language. Instead of asking users to 'enter your
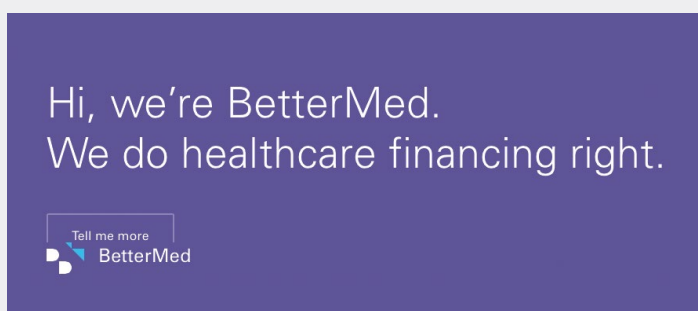
required medical procedure,' we asked them to finish a sentence beginning with 'I need...'

Of course, most of the time copywriters don't just want to keep a reader's attention or make a form simpler – we want them to act, too. And sometimes we want them to do something complicated. This is when clear language and easy steps are especially important. For example, when we wrote

the website for Bulb, a new renewable energy supplier, we made switching energy supplier easy. With just three simple steps, the reader was on their way.

Good writing has always been about making things more informative, more engaging and easier to use. But when you're writing for the web in the digital age, there's no margin for error because distraction is only ever just a click away.

NEXT MONTH

NEW TALENT SPECIAL: 2017 GRADUATE SHOWCASE

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How Bristol-based agency Halo is punching above its weight on the global stage

Plus: inspiring projects, current trends and expert analysis from the global design scene

ON SALE 21 JULY

Debbie Millman, *the influential designer, author and educator – and host of podcast Design Matters – shares how her love of logos and brands began.*

ON THE MARK

I fell in love with brands when I was in the seventh grade. I looked around and noticed everyone in school was wearing really cool trousers with a little red tag on the back pocket. The chic fashion of the day also included polo shirts featuring crocodiles stitched onto the fabric, right above the heart.

Levi's and Lacoste: the names that go along with these iconographies are intimately familiar to us now. In my junior high school years in the late '70s, Levi's and Lacoste clothing was more than my family could afford. Furthermore, my mother couldn't comprehend why we would have to pay more for the red tag and the crocodile, when the clothing without them was the same quality but cheaper.

To make matters even worse, my mother was a seamstress. She also didn't understand the appeal of buying something she could make herself. She compromised by offering to make the very same clothes from scratch. She'd stitch a red tag into the back pocket of the trousers; she'd glue a crocodile patch from the Leewards craft store onto a perfectly good polo shirt from Modell's.

While that plan didn't quite suit my aspirations of being a seventh grade trendsetter – or of being voted the best-dressed girl at Elwood Junior High – I eagerly pored through the racks of the local craft shop, desperately searching for a crocodile patch to stick on the front of my favourite pink polo shirt. Alas, there was nothing even close. The only remotely related substitute I found was a cute rendition of Tony the Tiger, but that really wasn't the look I was striving for.

Dejected and mopey, I rode my bike home from the craft shop. When my mum found out that I hadn't been successful, I could see she felt sorry for me. So she

Right: When she graduated high school in 1979, Debbie had finally saved enough money to purchase a real pair of Levi's and a Lacoste polo shirt.

took the matter into her own hands. The Lacoste shirts were too expensive, but there were some Levi's on sale at the Walt Whitman Mall, and she bought me a pair. But she didn't get the denim variety that everyone else was wearing; she found a design that must have been from the triple markdown rack – a pair of lime green corduroy bell-bottom Levi's.

It was with a mixture of horror and pride that I paraded in front of the full length mirror in my bedroom, ever so slightly sticking my bum out so that I could be sure the little red tag would show. So what if I was wearing lime green corduroy? They were Levi's. I was cool. My reign of logo worship had begun. ◻
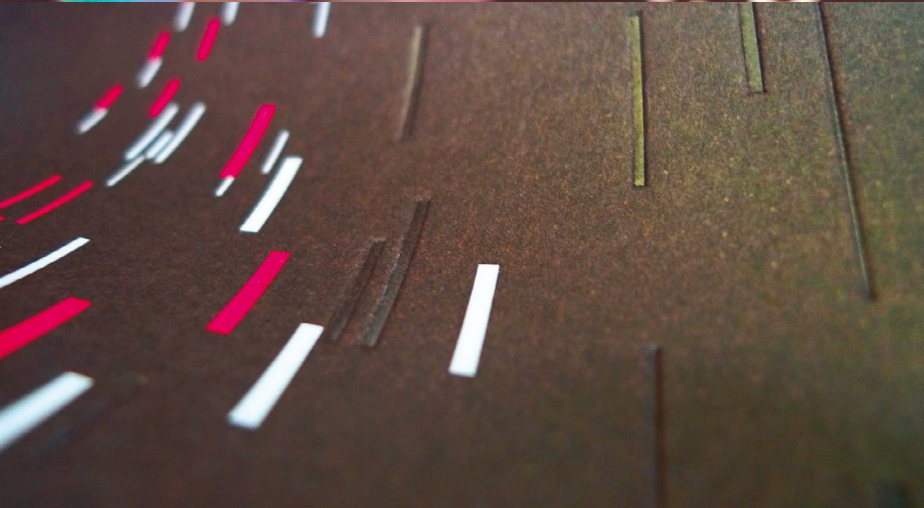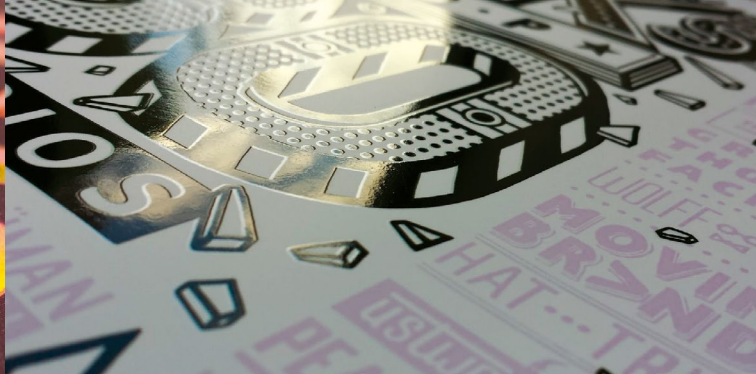
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